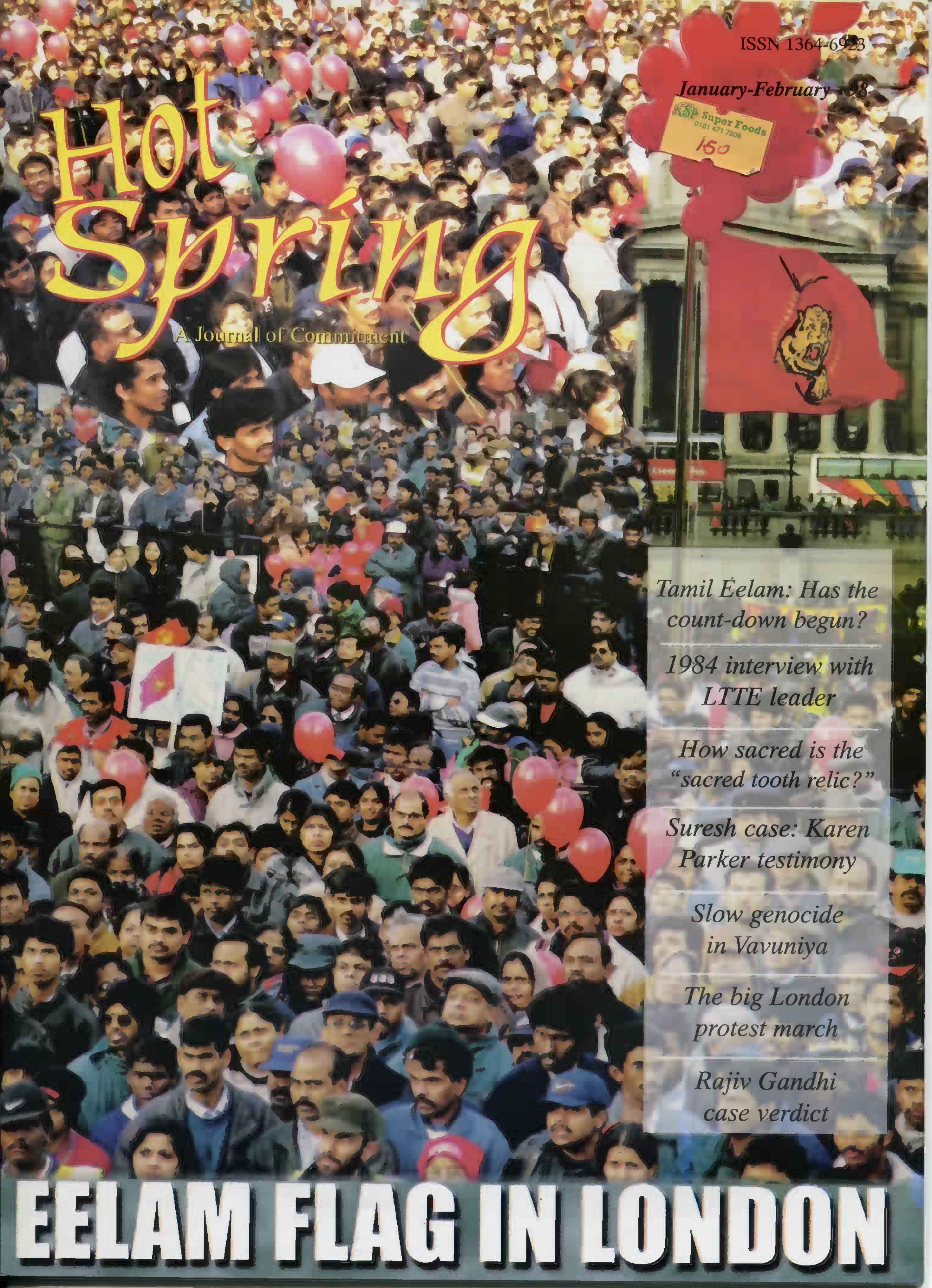


ISSN 1364-6923

January-February 98

KSP Super Foods
0181 471 7808
150

Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

Tamil Eelam: Has the count-down begun?

1984 interview with LTTE leader

How sacred is the "sacred tooth relic?"

Suresh case: Karen Parker testimony

Slow genocide in Vavuniya

The big London protest march

Rajiv Gandhi case verdict

EELAM FLAG IN LONDON

SATHY ESTATES LTD.
SATHY PROPERTY SERVICES

Residential Lettings

Landlords & Tenants Welcome

Landlords
Your rent is guaranteed
Quarterly rent payable in advance

Tenants
Accommodation arranged to suit
your comforts

Areas
London Boroughs of Brent
Harrow, Ealing, Barnet.

SATHY ESTATES LTD

177, High Road, Willesden,
London, NW10 2SD
Tel: 0181- 830 2585 Fax: 0181 - 830 3100

Hot Spring
A Journal of commitment

Vol: 3 Nº: 1 Jan-Feb 1998

Editor
S.Sivanayagam

HOT SPRING
P.O.Box 14258
London
SW16 6ZU
UK

Fax: + 44 (0) 181 696 7761

e-mail:
editor.hotspring@virgin.net

Published by

Melrose Publications Ltd.
U.K.

Price: £1.50

Annual subscription rates:

UK / India / Sri Lanka:
£18 / US $30
Australia: *Aus $50*
Canada: *Canada $45*
USA: *US $40*
All other countries:
£20 / US$ 40
(all inclusive of postage)
Cheques to be drawn in favour of Melrose Publications Ltd.

The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the publishers

Editorial Comment

TAMIL EELAM: HAS THE COUNT-DOWN BEGUN ?

"It's (the war) taken a very heavy toll, especially on the children. There is a lot of violence in our society. AND NOW THE VIOLENCE IS TURNING INWARD. We have the highest suicide and alcoholism rates in the world".

- President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga in an interview with Time magazine, February 9, 1998.

Those who fail to realise the depths of Tamil suffering caused by the war, fail equally to comprehend the creeping crisis that is devouring Sinhala society today. It is not only suicide and alcoholism, as the President says, but greed and corruption, murder and mayhem, incest and paedophilia, and a corroding helpless anger that is afflicting Sinhala society today. One sees the beginning of part wisdom in the President's above confession, but isn't she the very person carrying on this destructive war under her own coined slogan - WAR FOR PEACE ? How does one therefore explain this Presidential paradox ? **If she can herself see the "heavy toll"of the war on her own Sinhala society, why does she carry on with the war?**

The answer is simple. She is no longer in a position to cry halt to the war. The forces that she herself created in her helplessness against determined Tamil resistance - the arms dealers, the merchants of war, the foreign countries making business out of Third World human misery, not the least her own unsavoury uncle with a pronounced libido, they are the ones who are carrying on this war. President Chandrika is in the position of that little known Paris revolutionary of 1848, Alexandre-Auguste Ledru-Rullin, who, one day peeped out of his window, saw a mob pass by, and said: "I must follow them, for I am their leader". The quality of good leadership is to force events (as Mr.Prabhakaran does), not to chase behind events.

Madame Kumaratunga has in effect become a victim of a historical process. What her father Solomon Dias Bandaranaike did in 1956, by letting out the genie of Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonia from the bottle for the sake of grabbing political power and which he found it difficult to put it back, and which ultimately cost him his life at the hands of a Buddhist monk, what her mother Srimavo did in persisting with enthroning Sinhala-Buddhist supremacy in the country, which gave rise to Tamil militancy, and now what the daughter has done in bamboozling the world with the talk of peace while hiding her real agenda of war in her saree fold, are all part of that historical process leading to the very inevitable end that they had all along feared and which they resisted at the cost of over 60,000 human lives - a free Tamil Eelam. **1998 looks to be the year for the count-down to begin, possibly ending with the first year of the new millennium ! and the ushering in of a new nation state. The tremors that are plaguing Sinhala society are themselves indicators of that historical trend.**

If this sounds rhetoric to some, it is because they fail to see the Tamil Eelam struggle in terms of past historical determinism or because they lack a futuristic sense. It is also because the popular human mind does not accept any change willingly. It will continue to resist it until the change is forced on it. the reason being that most humans FEAR change, any kind of

(continued on page 3)

What They Say

"We must also , with humility,examine our failures. We have failed in the essential task of nation building".

- President Chandrika Kumaratunga, speaking in English at the Sri Lankan golden jubilee ceremony.

* * * * *

"Until one year before he came into government,my father was of the group that called for parity of status for the two languages. But finally, he didn't feel strong enough to stand up to the chauvinistic call".

- President Chandrika Kumaratunga on her father who inroduced the Sinhala Only Act , speaking to TIME magazine , Feb.9

* * * * *

"We were sad at the way our independence was celebrated.The road blocks affected my income, and the ordinary citizen was not allowed to witness the event live ".

- Sinhala three-wheel driver Philip Weragoda, quoted in the SUNDAY TIMES, Feb.8

* * * * *

"Arthur(Clarke) seems attracted to the rough, unsophisticated 17 and 18 year olds, although I know he has sampled much younger ones. Arthur likes casual affairs with a lot of different boys...

- Dr.Arthur Clarke's friend, retired Director, Current Affairs, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, Dayananda de Silva, quoted in SUNDAY MIRROR, London. and admitted by him to SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo.

* * * * *

"(General) Ratwatte has the distinction of being one of the few generals in the world, if not the only one, who has not attended staff college at a rank above lieutenant, or passed the exams officers have to take to climb from one rank to another. His rise has been the rise of the ultimate crony."

- SUNDAY LEADER, Colombo, Editorial comment.

* * * * *

"The capture of the highway will be a boost for the government, but on the other hand the opening of the road will escalate the war"

-Batticaloa M.P. Joseph Pararajasingam tells Reuters.

* * * * *

"I'm a very aggressive woman. . . my party members call me the fighting cock".

- Sarojini Yogeswaran tells BBC's Susannah Price in Jaffna.

* * * * *

"The Tigers would be happy that the military is extending its logistics line because as the line gets longer, they will be more easy to attack"

-former Air Force chief Harry Goonetilleke.

* * * * *

International

"Fifty years ago, Nehru reminded the people of India of their tryst with DESTINY. Today the Congress leaders are telling their countrymen of their tryst with the DYNASTY"

- BJP leader L.K.Advani (ASIAN AGE)

* * * * *

"I believe in my heart 99.9 per cent that it was not an accident. ....There was a conspiracy...I believe there were people who did not want Dodi and Diana to be together.."

- Mohamed Al Fayed, father of Dodi

* * * * *

"He's acting too noisily there".

- Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Bill Clinton's handling of the Iraq crisis..

* * * * *

"Madeleine Albright (the U.S. Secretary of State) said the other day "our patience is running out". I remember a man who used to say very much the same thing in the 1930s. The USA is now a bovine monster out of control".

- British playwright Harold Pinter leading mounting opposition to the U.S. and British aggressive stand over Iraq.

* * * * *

"He gives his upper body to the nation and what he has below is his private business".

- a Russian defending Clinton's sex life tells Russia's newspaper KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVADA.

* * * * *

"I think of myself as the daughter of Bharat, and I will be its daughter till I die".

- Italian born Sonia Gandhi addressing a Congress rally in New Delhi.

* * * * *

"If I marry an Italian woman, will they make me President of Italy ?"

- Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray in OUTLOOK

* * * * *

change But the fact of history is that changes do not stop happening because most people fear them or resist them. They are taking place all the time, under our own eyes and against our own wishes, sometimes quietly over a period of time, and sometimes with a bang!

Jawaharlal Nehru, one of those rare politicians imbued with a sense of history once wrote: *"History usually works slowly through the centuries, though sometimes there are periods of rush and burst-ups...."* To the Eelam Tamils, and to the country that they once thought they belonged - Sri Lanka - the last fifteen years have been a period of "rush and burst-ups". In such a period of "rush" events telescope into each other, institutions are overturned, and historical pressures affect both States and individuals. The unceasing churning of violence, the widening Tamil diaspora, the shifting of values, the changes in the behavioural patterns in Tamil society, are no doubt disturbing to some. But there is no point in complaining about them: they are part of the very structure of change, and are as much unavoidable as the birth pangs that accompany the delivery of of a child. As this writer said in another journal nine years ago, and would like to say it again: **Why should the birth pangs of a nation-state be any different ?**

The struggle for Tamil independence was not a new struggle in terms of historical tradition: nor is the concept of an independent Tamil state something that came out of a Pandora's box. If armed Tamil resistance to Sinhala hegemony began only in the early seventies, it did not mean that UNARMED resistance was not there. With the advent of Sinhala-Buddhist jingoism in the mid-fifties, also began Tamil resistance. Because it took the form of democratic, parliamentary protests, recourse to courts of law, and non-violent Gandhian satyagraha, the world did not take notice. The Sinhala conscience was not disturbed, The longer the Tamils persisted with their non-violent protests, the more violent became the government repression, which phase of Tamil resistance does not seem to have been registered even in the land of the Mahatma next door.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga made another confession in the recent TIME interview. She said: *"We have to look back and see where we have gone wrong... What we should have built was a Sri Lankan identity... Most Sinhalese politicians hoped they could sweep the whole problem under the carpet and forget about it..."*. To talk of a Sri Lankan identity in the year of our Lord 1998 means shutting out 42 years of history when her father put paid to any common identity with his Sinhala Only Act. **The President must know that the demand for an independent Tamil state was not wholly unanticipated by Sinhalese politicians even as early as 40 years ago.** The General Secretary of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. Leslie Goonawardene, speaking in the language debate virtually accepted the position that there was no consciousness of a Ceylonese nationality in the country. What was evident was a Sinhalese nationality and a Tamil nationality. He said : *"There is the grave danger ... if those people (Tamils) feel that a grave and irreparable injustice is done to them, there is a possibility of their deciding even to break away from the rest of the country". (Parliamentary Hansard, 8 June 1958).* Listening to that speech was the President's father, and the then Prime Minister, under whose rule occurred the first island-wide anti-Tamil riots of 1958.

The year 1958 was a time when Tamil militancy was unthinkable. Not even when Mr.Bandaranaike sent his army to the north and east. Said Mr.Bandaranaike who used to get carried by his own oratorical eloquence, at a meeting of the government parliamentary group meeting of June 3, 1958: **"My military forces are now in the east and the north. There is military rule in these two provinces, each with a military governor, yes, I say they are military governors. With my army I will see that there is no repeated attempt to set up a different administration in these provinces".** *(EMERGENCY '58: The Story of the Ceylon Race Riots, by Tarzie Vittachi, Andre Deutsch, London)* The report of the meeting was written by one of the M.Ps present

1958 was an year when the present Tamil national leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was barely four years old, when Tamil youths went about with a singular attachment to studies, when Tamil girls wouldn't dare get up on a bicycle. Their hankering for higher education, their sense of self-denial in shouldering family responsibilities, and their very passiveness were qualities known even to Sinhala society. **How than did a whole new generation come to undergo a sudden transformation in thinking, to drop their traditional values, forsake parents, homes, family attachments and schools, throw their text books and take to guns ? Madame President with her Sorbonne education must surely know the answer to that.**

Such is the "rush and burst-ups" of history that today the President is called upon to reap what her father, mother and other Sinhala politicians sowed. There is no point in imagining that it is now possible for the two nations to retrace their steps back on a common Sri Lankan path that for over 40 years has been littered with hundreds of thousands of Tamil skulls and bones. After all, it was a Sinhalese journalist, one of the rare perceptive ones, who ended his book about the frightening story of the anti-Tamil riots of 1958 with the following words, **"What are we left with? A nation in ruins, some grim lessons which we cannot afford to forget and a momentous question: Have the Sinhalese and the Tamils reached the parting of the ways?".**

S.Sivanayagam

Jaffna: 'Like living in an open prison'

By CHRISTOPHER KREMMER

writes in The Sydney Morning Herald, January 24 1998.

In Jaffna city the tropical curfew-bound nights are still punctuated by gunfire, as the Tamil Tigers, now based in jungles to the South, Infiltrate and harass the 35,000 government troops in the peninsula.

Hundreds of LTTE cadre are already in the town, according to intelligence reports. On a recent weekday, the centre of Jaffna was sealed off by hundreds of steel- helmeted soldiers conducting identity checks and search and cordon operations.

"It's like living in an open prison" said Dr. D.C. Ambalavanar , who returned last year to work at the only functioning hospital. "You can't do anything without the consent and approval of the military. whether it be bringing in a T.V set from Colombo, or drug or anything else."

In the back streets, hooded informers, often victims of torture, pick alleged LTTE sympathisers from among suspects paraded before them. Amnesty International reported last year at least 600 unexplained disappearances, of civilians from Jaffna. The army which is investigating 335 disappearances, says it has taken steps to improve human rights.

Dated and numbered receipts are supposed to be issued to the next of kin of detained persons, standing orders, prohibit torture, and soldiers are receiving Tamil language training. But the soldiers at most checkpoints in Jaffna still speak Sinhala, a foreign language here. Social workers in the town say 200 people a week request treatment for post-traumatic stress syndrome due to torture and abuse.

There are only three surgeons at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, which serves a population of half a million people, many of whom suffer landmine injuries as well as common illnesses. Critical shortages of essential drugs are common.

The city currently gets three megawatts of electricity, enough only for a few hours in the night. People queue for hours to use a handful of telephones. Shops boast a greater variety of goods than in the days when the Tigers held the town but economic development has by-passed Jaffna.

With the main road south still held by the separatists, there is no overland route to the capital. Limited air and sea links are inadequate. Security clearance for travel to Colombo can take up to two months.

Some 50,000 people have died in the conflict but, miraculously many of Jaffna's ornate Hindu temples have survived.

In most places, universities are hotbeds of politics. But Jaffna university, which reopened last July is a sanctuary. Most of the staff and students filed during the fighting, continuing their classes in areas under LTTE control.

❑ ❑ ❑

NEWS BRIEFS

Replacing lost Heli gunships

A Sri Lankan Air Force team headed by Chief of Staff Air Vice Marshal Anslem Peiris has visited Ukraine to negotiate the purchase of a Mi-24 helicopter. Sri Lanka lost two of its three Mi-24 gunships last year.

What a Sinhala soldier said

A Sinhala soldier who managed to save his life during the LTTE attack on the Valaichchenai T.Junction army camp on the 27th night told the Sinhala daily DIVAINA at Polonnaruwa base hospital that about 500 Tigers stormed the camp suddenly leaving no time for soldiers to retaliate and within 20 minutes brought two tractors, loaded all ammunition in the camp, and took off.

The truth about the LTTE ban

The UNP, while noticing that the government has not issued a formal gazette announcement about proscribing the LTTE, though the government media announced it, decided at their Working Committee meeting to appoint a special committee to find out the truth.

Sinhala parents seek ICRC help

Hundreds of parents and relatives of missing Sinhala soldiers besieged the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross office in Layards Road in Colombo on 26th January, appealing for help in tracing the missing soldiers. They said that even though ten months had passed since the "Jayasikuru" operation began, they had no knowledge until then as to what happened to their children who were sent to the war front. The government was unable to help them, they said.

"No political tamashas in holy places"

A protest petition signed by 512 persons, compiled by Peradeniya University Bhikku Union against using of sacred places for political tamashas, has been sent to President Chandrika Kumaratunga. They say the end result of this stupid practice is devastation to priceless religious monuments, like what happened to the Dalada temple.

Army officer in LTTE ranks ?

A report in the Sinhala daily, the LANKADEEPA of Feb.11 states: Defence sections have learnt from some arrested female Tigers that, an army officer arrested by the LTTE during their attack on the Mullaitivu army camp in 1996, is coordinating the LTTE mortar attacks on "Jayasikuru" forces and Elephant Pass and Paranthan army camps.

Colombo bomb blast: Eight killed

At least eight people were killed and many more injured when an alleged suicide bomber exploded the bomb at slave Island Colombo on February 6. Four Air Force personnel including two women were among those killed. The incident is reported to have happened when Air Force personnel checked the alleged woman suicide bomber opposite the Air Force grounds. Police later claimed that the woman's identity has been established as Indrani from Batticaloa. Others killed were identified as Paramaseelan(32) from Wattegama and Suresh Kumar (38) from Mutwal, and Kumaravel Surendran (29, a fish stall owner of the area.

PLOTE and EPDP clash in Jaffna

Three EPDP men who suffered serious head injuries in the course of a clash with PLOTE members were admitted to Jaffna hospital on February 11. The incident occurred when eight EPDP members in four motor cycles became involved in an argument with PLOTE members near the latter's office near Vembadi Girls' High School. The argument soon developed into blows. The EPDP members were then hit with clubs, and their motor cycles smashed up. The three men were then taken in a passing three-wheeler and admitted to hospital. Following this incident, there was tension in the area. Shops were closed and pedestrians fled

Army harasses wedding crowds

Sinhala armed forces on February 3 went around intimidating

Tamils at various wedding functions in Batticaloa. On that day there were some 50 weddings in Batticaloa town and the occupying forces set up numerous checkpoints where they interrogated and harassed wedding crowds - including brides alleging that the LTTE had infiltrated the town to launch attacks during Sri Lanka's independence day on February 4.

Chandrika's appeal to army deserters

Sri Lanka President Mrs.Kumaratunga has urged thousands of army deserters to return to their ranks. She vowed there would be no disciplinary action taken against those who returned voluntarily under an amnesty to mark the country's 50th anniversary of independence. The government is also re-employing soldiers who retired from service after completing 12 years in armed forces but are still under the age of 57.

Summons again on ex-Jaffna G.A.

The Colombo High Court has re-issued summons on Jaffna's former Government Agent, Chelliah Pathmanathan in a case where he is charged with withholding information regarding some LTTE suspects When the case was called recently, the former G.A. was not present to answer the indictment served on him by the Attorney General under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was ordered to appear on February 24.

"Kasippu" home guard let off from fine

A Sinhala "home guard" G.G.Kumarasingha from Jayanthipura, Trincomalee who pleaded guilty to the charge of possessing "kasippu" (an illicit alchoholic brew) was relieved from paying the fine imposed on him, when lawyer for the accused Miss Shanika Perera pleaded that he would lose his job if he was convicted. The magistrate thereupon ordered him to pay Rs.6000 as Crown costs.

Remanded for having Colombo map

A 60-year old Tamil woman who came to Jaffna by air from Colombo was arrested on arrival under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and produced before the Mallakam magistrate M.ThirUnavakkarasu, who ordered her to be remanded. The Kankesanturai police told the magistrate that the woman had a map of Colombo in her handbag.

TULF searching for Jaffna premises

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) is on the lookout for a suitable location in the Jaffna peninsula,for its party office, 17 years after its old office was burned down by pro-government police thugs in 1981. It will be remembered that on the nights of May 30 and June 1, 1981, the TULF office at Main Street was burned down, along with the Jaffna Public Library, with its 95,000 volumes, the office and machinery of the "Eelanadu" Tamil newspaper , the home of the Jaffna M.P.of that time .V.Yogeswaran (the husband of the present Mayor) and several bookshops.

600 beggars taken off Colombo

Over 600 beggars in the Colombo city area were bundled into trucks and deposited at Ridigama in the Ambalangoda area days before Sri Lanka's golden jubilee celebrations, because government felt that they would be an eyesore especially over the impending visit of Prince Charles.

Oath taking in Jaffna put off

The new members of the Jaffna district local bodies did not take their oaths as scheduled on Feb.18. It has now been postponed to 18th March. The newly appointed Mayor is reported to have met the Minister with a view to enabling some elected members to step down in favour of some prominent people.

Police probe on Arthur Clarke

Sri Lankan police have started investigations on allegations that science fiction writer was a paedophile. Four persons named in the British tabloid - the SUNDAY MIRROR - which carried the allegations were summoned and questioned at police headquarters. British-born Clarke who has lived in Sri Lanka for 30 years, has denied the allegations.

Armed men attack senior journalist

Igbal Athas, a senior journalist who writes the "defence column" for the SUNDAY TIMES, was attacked by armed men at his home in Nugegoda on February 12. He and his wife and daughter were threatened by a gang armed with pistols having broken into his house around 9 p.m. on that day. Athas has been under constant harassment for some time, despite his complaint to the president. His exposure of corruption among some high-ups in the armed forces is believed to be the provocation for such harassment.

PLOTE also is terrorist - Canadian court.

The validity of a security certificate against an alleged former member of the People's Liberation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) has been upheld by a Federal Court in Canada. Al though the defence for

Satkuneswaran Kandiah, the person named in the certificate argued that the defendant was not a member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the judge held that his connections with the PLOTE made him liable.

happened to their children who were sent to the war front. The government was unable to help them, they said.

Swiss woman tourist robbed at Bentota

Two armed robbers who entered a house at Bentota in the southwest coast of Sri Lanka on the 26th January night tied a Swiss tourist residing there to a bed fully naked, stabbed her, and scooted off with money and property worth well over Rs.2 lkhs. The woman was admitted to hospital in a serious condition.

B.A.suspends flights to Sri Lanka

British Airways will temporarily suspend flights to Sri Lanka from end of March because of mounting losses on the route and a loss of market share to charter operations. Kevin Steele, general manager of British Airways, South Asia told a Press Conference in Colombo that the B.A. had run up losses of several million pounds during its 2 2 year tenure in Sri Lanka. He said the decision was purely commercial.

Buddhist monk on sex charge

A Buddhist bhikkhu, Ratmalana Sri Siddhartha Thera,of Elumalai, Kataragama, was charged before the Galle High Court with forcing sex with four young sisters of the same family. While one of the victims, a girl of eleven was being cross examined by the defence counsel, she fainted, and the judge ordered that the case be resumed on March

Fly "Monara Air" to Jaffna

Luxury A new/domestic air service is to be inaugurated soon to fly passengers from Colombo to Jaffna and back. The facility is meant to be a boon particularly/Tamil expatriates living in the West. The European office of "Monara Air" is situated in Switzerland. Intending passengers are asked to contact Kumaresh Balakrishnan , Monara Air, 180, Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 4. Telephone:582 806. Fax: 074 515174. The Swiss office contact is: Mr.Jay, Monara Air, Seluaustr.6, 8002 Zurich. Phone: 01/2013371. Fax: 00411 2010624.

New Tamil Eelam police station

A new Tamil Eelam police station was opened on February 7 at Visvamadu to cater to the areas of Tharmapuram, Kandavalai, Murasumoddai, Vaddakachchi and Chundikulam in the Vanni district. The Tamil Eelam national flag was raised at the opening ceremony by the main police administrator Mavannan.

Abduction by night at Vavuniya camp

Armed Sri Lankan soldiers in civil dress are reported to be entering the Poomthottam army detention centre at Vavuniya by night and taking away young Tamil men and women for supposed interrogation. None of those thus taken come back, and there are fears that they could have been either tortured and killed or raped. Parents have raised the issue with authorities and NGOs, but no action appears to have been taken.

Cement offer to Dalada Maligawa

Puttalam Cement Company Ltd. has in a letter addressed to President Kumaratunga offered to donate all cement required for the restoration of the Dalada Maligawa damaged by the recent bombing. It has also undertaken to deliver this cement at the site at company's expense. They said they will do that in consultation with Holderbank of Switzerland. Puttalam Cement Co. Ltd. is the only fully integrated cement plant in Sri Lanka.

Tea workers' strike cost 66m. dollars

The 9-day strike by tea plantation workers demanding a higher wage had cost Sri Lanka's economy four billion rupees (66 million dollars), according to official estimates. Under a deal hammered out between the government and the influential Ceylon Workers' Congress on Feb.13, the basic daily salary of workers is to be increased from 83 rupees to 95 rupees. A price-share bonus at current world market prices would add another six rupees, for a take-home pay of 101 rupees.

Kiss in T-shirt cost him Rs.5.000

A nan who appeared in a courthouse in Colombo wearing a T-shirt with the picture oi' a couple kissing passionately was promptly charged with contempt of court and fined Rs.5,000/

Welikadage Don Saminda had come to the Maligakande court to stand bail for a relative. The police stripped the shirt and handed it to nagistrate Mohammed Sahib. who ordered the police to burn the shirt. Saminda paid the i'ine and was thereupon released.

Ban on bomb blast photographs

The Sri Lankan government has bann*d publication of photographs of persons killed or wounded in bomb blasts in the country..

☐ ☐ ☐

Krishanthy case: Accused make statements from the dock

Trial at Bar hearing the Krishanthy rape and murder case allowed an application by the defence for their clients to make statements from the dock at the voir dire inquiry.

Trial at Bar comprises High Court judges Nimal Dissanayake (Chairman), Gamini Abeyratne and Andrew Somawanse.

Defence Counsel Ranjan de Silva moved for the accused army and police officers to make dock statements in support of their defence that their clients had not made any statements to the Military Police voluntarily.

The first accused Corporal Saman Rajapakse in his dock statement said that he had taken part in Sath Jaya Operation at which he was a victim of a mortar attack. He had breathing difficulty and was admitted to Colombo Army Hospital.

While he had been under hospitalised treatment, he was taken away to Palaly by the Military Police by plane. From Palaly Air Port premises, he had to walk to the army camp. At that time he fainted. He was taken to the Jaffna Army Hospital, where doctors refused to admit him.

He said that it was Major Sumith who took him there. He was then produced before Lieutenant Mahesh who assaulted him and handed him over to Corporal Manampery. who in turn assaulted him.

He was told that if he wanted medicine for his ailment, or if he wanted to go home, safely without any case, to give the statements in the way they dictated.

Accused Rajapakse concluded that since he was unable to bear any assault any further as he desired to live, he signed the document prepared by the Military Police. He did not make any statement voluntarily to the police, he said.

All the accused denied any knowledge of the offence and reiterated that they signed under duress.

M. Jayasinghe, Pradeep Priyadharshana, Shantha Perera, S. W. Alwis, Mutu Banda, M. Jayatilleke and Indrajith Kumara are the other accused who made dock statements.

An application by the defence to re-summon the earlier witness police offcer Nasser was allowed by Court.

Assistant Solicitor General D. P. Kumarasinghe with State Counsel Miss Mihindu Wickremaratne prosecuted.

Kumar Ponnambalam with T. Poopalan and Nagarajah Thiru cumaran watched the interests of the aggrieved party.

UNHCR head expresses concern over internally displaced persons.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata has criticised governments for paying "little attention" to the plight of the internally displaced persons. She was speaking at a recent lecture at Manila.

Ogata said the problem of the internally displaced people was a matter of major concern for the UNHCR.

Referring specifically to Sri Lanka, she said that several hundred thousand people have been displaced in that country as a result of fighting between government troops and separatist ethnia Tamil rebels. She criticized governments for looking at the problem as an issue of national sovereignty.

"The situation of internally displaced persons is often even more compelling than that of the refugees since many do not benefit from international protection and assistance", she said.

According to the UNHCR, there are about 1.7 million internally displaced people in Asia, along with about 4.8 million refugees.

SUNDAY LEADER COMMENT

"Ratwatte a standing joke"

GLIB,irreflective, fatuous,vacuous - words that spring to mind in describing the latest antics of our self-proclaimed national hero, Anuruddha Ratwatte. Honestly, one wonders whether people like this ever glance at a mirror to see how absolutely ridiculous they look. Of all the ways there are of clinging on to power, this is definitively the cheapest. Faking resignation.

And even here, Ratwatte has no claim to originality: It has been done before. Dictator of Egypt from 1956 to 1970, Gamal Abd-Al Nasser beat him it. Trounced by the Israelis in the six-day war of 1967, hissed and booed by his countrymen, Nasser resigned. Being president, he presumably offered his resignation to himself. He then declined to accept it (thanks to his cousin Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ratwatte was spared this embarrassment). Of course, It was first made sure that the streets were thronged with suporters demanding that he withdraw his resignation. Even printed posters were on display. For a government that is slow to act, that was indeed fast work.

Unlike Ratwatte, Nasser was a war hero, having fought with valour and been seriously wounded in the 1948 Arab-Israel war. Also unlike Ratwate, he was modest enough to remain a colonel for the entirety of his presidency, until his death (from natural causes) in 1970. Fittingly, Sri-Lanka's SLFP-dominated United Front government of the time declared a day of national mourning and flew the flag at half mast. Equally fittingly, when the holy of holies of SriLanka's national honour and heritage, the Dalada Maligawa was attacked, taking 16 innocent people with it, no such symbols of mourning were forthcoming. Arriving to view the damage, as he does so often after these now-commonplace disasters, Ratwatte too, was spontaneously booed and hissed by the citizens of his native Kandy. True to his reputation of letting his tongue run some yards in advance of his brain, he solemnly pledged not only to have the damage repaired in no time at all, but also to go ahead with the February 4 independence celebration in Kandy, as planned. So swollen with his own importance has he become, that he evidently did not think to seek anyone else's opinion.

His subsequent letter of resignation was no *mea culpa*. It was a carefully drafted argument for his own survival. He had, he said, acted on his president's instructions and was therefore implicitly innocent of any wrongdoing. However, if someone had to take the rap, he was happy to offer his own neck. Couched in these terms. It was impossible for Kumaratunaga to accept Ratwatte's resignation. The letter of Resignaton was not so much a case of taking responsibility as of passing the buck....

Hats off, however, to Ratwatte for his stage management. Amazingly, the nation's streets were simultaneously plastered with posters demanding he withdraw his resignation less than 24 hours after its release to the media(who released it, by the way?) How it was that the nation in its need for expression turned to the same two posters, printed by the same press, defies imagination. Even before any response was forthcoming from Kumaratunga, Ratwatte's commander in chief, the PA-controlled media were out in the open, attacking the UNP and exhorting Ratwatte to remain in office.

Unfortunately for him-and sadly for the army and the country-Ratwatte has become a standing joke. One never knows whether to laugh or to cry at his increasingly pompous and fatuous pronouncements. Which have for some time now been rivalling Kumaratunga's own specious rhetoric(e.g. a promise to abolish the executive presidency more than two years ago) It was Ratwatte who as minister of power presided over the power cuts of 1996 (taking time off in the midst of it all however, to get married) **It was he who promised that by February 4 the army would establish a land supply route to Jaffna. It was he who promised security for Kandy so the independence celebrations could be held there.** It was he who promised after the maligawa bomb that they would still be held there. The country has a right to wonder at what point it is to start taking this man seriously?

The fact, is Ratwatte has become a joke in his own time....

No one quite knows whether Ratwatte conducts battles and designs strategy himself, but his military trimmings must be a severe disincentive for any of the professional officers under him to attempt to do so.. Yet, they must know that Ratwatte has the distinction of being one of the few generals in the world, if not the only one, who has not attended staff college at a rank above lieutenant, or passed the examinations officers have to take to climb from one rank to another. His rise has been the rise of the ultimate crony....

(Sunday Leader Comment, Feb.01.98)

South African N.G.O, Condemns SriLanka

4th February 1998 His Excellency
Mr. M.M.A. Faroque,
Acting High Commissioner,
Sri Lankan High Commission,
410 Alexander Road
Brooklyn - Pretoria

Dravidians For Peace and Justice, South African Chapter, is a Human Rights Organisation monitoring Human Rights Abuses Worldwide. Presently our focus is on Sri Lanka.

Your country stands accused by the international Community for the crime of genocide on the Tamil People. More than 55,000 lives have been claimed and more than 600,000 rendered homeless.

A legacy of government policies and initiatives which tolerated and at times encouraged gross human rights violations, and the continuing lack of accountability for past abuses lie behind the crises on your island.

South Africa underwent the most horrendous crimes during the apartheid era, but was nothing compared to what is taking place in your country.

Tolerance of language, religion and culture is practised by all civilised democracies, but sadly lacking by your Sinhala - Buddhist State.

Although your 1978 Constitution contains a section on fundamental rights, including the prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, freedom from arbitrary arrests, right to fair trial, a number of procedural rights, freedom of thought, religion, expression, peaceful assembly, freedom of movement and further Sri Lanka also ratified a number of treaties under international law, providing for protection of fundamental rights, in particular the international Convention against Torture.

Inspite of these constitutional guarantees and international obligations, a number of discriminatory laws have been passed and are largely still in force, and as a consequence of these repressive and discriminate laws used against Tamils, in particular young Tamil men, has created a nationalism amongst Tamils in order to preserve their culture and freedom. Moreover the successive governments have done little to broker a lasting peace. These discriminatory laws were tailored to be used against **TAMILS.**

The elections in the North and East of the island were rigged. Where, did the 100, 000 voters suddenly cast their ballots? Were the boxes filled with precasted votes?

Much was said about the LTTE destroying the Temple Of Tooth, which they deny, yet there were no responses when hundreds of temples, churches and mosques were destroyed by the Sri Lankan army, airforce and Sinhala thugs since 1948.

Last year alone the war cost the country one third of the governments revenue totalling to 50 billion rupees (833 million dollars), yet, it is living from foreign hand outs.

The following issues are presently of concern to ourselves:

I Brutal occupation of Sri Lankan military forces of the North and Eastern areas.

2 The government runs concentration camps in parts of the Tamil areas incarcerating tens of thousands of Tamils.

3 Deliberate anti-civilian military actions to terrorise Tamil people and seize their fertile lands and the Sinhalese have been settled there with armed protection and financial assistance. Tamils have been made foreigners in their own areas.

4 Tamils are required to carry identity cards at all times and hence the massive numbers of arrests take place daily for not meeting this discriminatory requirement.

5 Detention of Tamils without trial and death as a result of torture is a daily occurrence in Sri Lanka. Mutilated bodies of victims of Sri Lankan Oppression have surfaced in all parts of the country.

6 Sri Lankan army and politicians have committed a number of terrorist acts, including the killing of opponents, and have blamed the responsibility for these acts on the liberation movements in a move to discredit them.

7 All news reported from Sri Lanka is controlled strictly by the military. Reporters have been barred from going independently into Tamil areas and assessing the situation for themselves. The few international reports that surface in the media are based on guided tours of the war areas by the military. These reporters are only shown what the military want them to see. Thus the whole world has been blinded by the events of Sri Lanka.

8 indiscriminate aerial bombing, naval shelling, mortar firing is ongoing in Sri Lanka today. What kind of government kills its civilians by bombing a church (St. Peters in Navaly) and a school in Nagar Kovil in which many children died?

Taking the above into consideration can a country celebrate such an occasion under the banner of Democracy amidst such wanton destruction of property and the undignifed loss of life?

We appeal to your government to negotiate a peaceful settlement and if invited to mediate, we would not hesitate to offer our services.

Yours faithfully
G.M. Veerabadren

The Suresh case: Karen Parker's testimony

In the Federal Court of Canada : The Manickavasagam Suresh inquiry held before Mr. Justice Teitelbaum March 21 1996.

Karen Parker

KAREN PARKER, affirmed Examination-in-chief-BY-MR WALDMAN:

THE REGISTRAR: Would you please state your name and address for the Court, please? THE WITNESS: *Karen Parker, 154 5th Avenue, San Francisco, California, U.S.A.*

MR.WALDMAN:

Q. I am going to take you through your credentials and ask that you be qualified as an expert in international law and international humanitarian law, and I am also...

HIS LORDSHIP: Wait a minute now, expert in international law?

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. International law and intenational humanitarian law, and I am going to also ask about your particular expertise vis-a-vis the Tamil situation, given that you have written several articles on that. I gather you have been called to the bar in California and you have got your law degree?

A. *Yes.*

Q. You have also got...and that was from the University of San Francisco Law School?

A. *Yes.*

Q. You also have a diploma in International Law and Comparative international Law from the University of Strasbourg in Framce?

A. *It is actually the international Institute of Human Rights which has a program in conjunction with the University of Strasbourg.*

HIS LORDSHIP: is that the place where I think I attended for human rights seminars?

THE WITNESS: *Yes, I hope so.*

HIS LORDSHIP: it is in Strasbourg.

THE WITNESS: *Yes. The summer program? Was it a summer program or...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, it was in the summer, yes.

THE WITNESS: *...the training session?*

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. I also understand that you are a practising attomey and that you specialize in intemational law and intemational humanitarian law?

A. *That is correct.*

Q. I also understand that you have appeared and you are a non-govemmental representative before the United Nations representing a non-govemment organization. Perhaps you can give us some details about which organizations you have represented and since when?

A. *Yes, I would be happy to. Since 1982, I have represented Disabled Peoples' Intemational, a non-govemmental organization credentialed at the United Nations. I have also represented Human Rights Advocates. I currently represent International Educational Development Humanitarian Law Project an organization granted credentials by Dag Hammerskjoldt. I also represent the Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund, also a United Nations NGO.*

Q. Please forgive me, what is the CR Club?

MR. WALDMAN: Sierra.

THE WITNESS: Sierra

HIS LORDSHIP: Oh, the Sierra Club, sorry.

THE WITNESS: Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund. Sorry, Your Honour.

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes, fine. Sorry, I thought you said "CR."

BY_MR WALDMAN:

Q. Could you explain a bit to the Court, when you say that you are a representative, what are your functions or responsibilities as a representative of a nongovernmental organization?

A. *In the United Nations system nongovernmental organization representatives are allowed to present oral testimo-*

ny on every agenda item at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its subcommission. We are also allowed to submit written documents, within a certain format, to the United Nations, which are published by the United Nations as part of the record. I have had a number of...I have probably had 43 or 44...I have lost count somewhere...documents that I have written published by the United Nations itself on behalf of non-governmental organizations. We also can attend any of the functions of the United Nations, but it is uniquely at the commission and the subcommission where we have such a right of initiative and a right to make statements.

I have also made statements before a number of the treaty bodies in the United Nations human rights system, including the Committee on Civil and Political Rights, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the elimination of racial discrimination.

Q. Now, you have said you have written 43 or so, somewhat...

A. *It could be up to 50, at this point. Really, I am afraid I have lost count.*

Q What topics have you written these briefs on? Could you give us some idea of what they are about?

A. *I have written a number on the general application of humanitarian law to certain of the country situations or in general. I have written three or four on the situation in Sri Lanka specifically, I have written on the armed conflict in Kashmir. I have had statements on El Salvador and Guatemala, statements incorporating Burma as well. I have written on the situation of children in time of armed conflict. I have written on the rights of wounded combatants and civilians to receive humanitarian aid. I have written on general issues of disability, wartime disability, discrimination in general, a fairly wide range of topics, but mostly focused on application of humanitarian law under certain situations.*

Q. When we talk about humanitarian we are talking about intemational law conventions and Geneva Conventions?

A. *Humanitarian law is law applicable only in situations of armed conflict and govems both the behaviour of armed forces in the actual combat and it also involves protections for victims of armed conflict, including civilians and combatants.*

Q. So, you have written all of these articles related to the rules of war, the comportment of the parties to the armed conflict, all rclating to the intemational conventions customary to intemational law?

A. *I would say about two thirds to three quarters of the printed NGO documents that the United Nations has printed of mine, they are about humanitarian law. Some of the other ones, only marginally, if at all.*

Q. You said you have spoken before the Human Rights Commission?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Do you regularly attend the sessions of the Human Rights Commission?

A. *Yes. I have attended I believe it is every session of the commission since 1982 and every session of the subcommission since 1982 with the exception of the session of 1991.*

Q. And the commission sits when?

A. *In February-March, normally. This year, it is actually sitting now and when I leave here I will go to Geneva. It is meeting this year from midMarch to the end of April.*

Q. And the subcommissions, when do they meet?

A. *August.*

Q. August. What subcommissions have you attended?

A. *Every session since 1982, with the exception of 1991.*

Q. What is the title of the subcommission?

A. *It is the Subcommission on Protection of Minorities and Promotion of NonDiscrimination.*

Q. Now, have you testified as an expert witness in other judicial proceedings?

A. *Yes, I have.*

Q. Could you tell us about that? Where...

A. *I have testified as an expert directly or through written materials that have been submitted in Virginia, Baltimore, Chicago, Texas, Califomia, Nebraska. There have been several where I have appeared and the judge has actually used my work that I didn't know about until after the fact. I have testified as an expert in courts outside the United States as well, in Norway, in Japam, the Tokyo High Court, second instance appeals in Norway.*

Q. On what issues were you recognized as an expert?

A. *In human rights and humanitarian law issues.*

Q. In all of these cases where you appeared as an expert it is vis-a-vis these issues?

A. *Yes, it was.*

Q. Now, you tell us you have been on fact-finding missions?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Could you explain to us what is involved in a fact-fmding mission and on behalf of whom?

A. *I have on been on fact-finding missions on behalf of a number of organizations. I have also gone on fact-fmding missions with members of the United States Congress. On a fact-fmding mission, you travel to a country where there are allegations of human rights or humanitarian law violations; and, to the best of your ability, you attempt to verify. It is sometimes difficult because govemments always say, "Those* *guys are doing that thing," and it simply sits as an allegation unless it can be proved.*

On fact-finding missions, I have visited jails, I have seen and interviewed inmates. I have worked with prisoners of war. I have interviewed heads of state, military commanders. I have visited military bases. I have observed military aircraft and other military materiel. I have reviewed human rights and Geneva Convention instruction of military forces by certain govemments. I have interviewed members of Congress. I have spoken before congresses in other countries. I have met with human rights attomeys in a number of countries, given press interviews, met with a variety of ambassadors, including, I am pleased to say, Canadian ambassadors in some of the countries where I have been investigating in the field, also other human rights workers, medical personnel.

Q. You said that...out of curiosity, you were one of four Americans to address the human rights at the 1988 U.S.S.R./U.S.A. Summit. What was that exactly about?

A. *As part of the United States/ U.S.S.R. summit process which initiated in Geneva in the Reagan administration in the United States and with Mr. Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, there was a permanent human rights item. Under the item, human rights lawyers or human rights groups in each country could submit information or documentation on human rights problems in the two countries and have that be part of the dialogue process.*

In 1988, the summit was to be held in Moscow and several of the groups with whom I had worked in the United States wanted to make sure that the issues of human rights violations in the United States were presented at the summit, the view being that because it was going to be in the Soviet Union, it would unduly focus on human rights violations in the Soviet Union; amd, therefore, the human rights concerns of American citizens wouldn't be properly before the forum.

I located a donor who was willing to foot the bill through the organization and I attended with three members of native American tribes in the United States. We met with Mr. Gorbachev, we met with members of the, at that point, Soviet Foreign Ministry Human Rights Desk where we presented information that they were the liaison people in tbe human rights talks. The Americam president refused to meet with us, though we did request it. His human rights staff people also refused to meet with us during that event, the refusal of which generated more press for our side than had we in fact met.

Q. I would like to go through some of your publications. I gather this is just a selected list that you provided me with?

A. *Yes.*

Q. I note that there are several articles that you have written on the Tamil situation including one entitled "The Tamil National Question"...no..."Sri Lanka in a Civil War Situation" and "Self-Determination of Peoples in the Tamil National Struggle" and "Humanitarian Law and the Tamil Struggle." Those are the three that I see that are directly related to the Tamil situation. Have you studied specifically the Tamil situation in terms of your concerns about the application of humanitarian law, the right to self-determination and the rules for it?

A. *Yes, I have. I made my first statement at the United Nations on the Tamil question in 1983 at the time of the communal rioting in Colombo. At that time, the subcommission adopted a resolution on that situation and I continued to raise the issues naturally invoked by the situation ever since.*

Q. Have you studied in detail and in depth on your own, independently of any information we have provided you, the situation of the Tamils in Sri Lanka?

A. *Oh, absolutely, yes.*

Q. Do you feel that you are cognizant of the situation so as to be able to give testimony on the rights of the Tamils to self-determination?

A. *Absolutely.*

Q. And you are capable of discussing the questions of humanitarian law as their applicability to specifically the Tamil situation?

A. *Yes.*

Q. One last area. You have, I note, in your 'resume' that you have given testimony before the United States Congress. Can you tell us on what basis you have done that?

A. *I was asked to submit testimony On several occasions to the United States Congress. One particular piece was on the events of the 1986 session of the Commission on Human Rights. I also was asked and presented testimony on the situation of Sri Lanka, that was in 1987. I have submitted at two times testimony on the situation in Burma. These have all been part of the...incorporated into the hearing records on the relevant hearings. I have also been invited by members of Congress to give specific briefings on many of these topics, including Sri Lanka, application of humanitarian law, et cetera. I think I have probably. I have lost count on those, I am afraid, also, but it must be somewhere between eight amd ten times where members of Congress have invited me and then invited their colleagues to a briefing session, at which point I would discuss application of humanitarian law, human rights in certain situations.*

Q. Now, when you say you were invited to give testimony before the Subcommittee on Asian and Public Affairs at the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1987, who invited you? Did the committee itself invite you?

A. *Yes, the staff members of the chairs.*

MR. WALDMAN: Those are my questions with respect to the qualifications of this witness.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: No questions, My Lord.

HIS LORDSHIP: I have no problem with understanding that you have done a great deal of work and testified in many places and given evidence. But, I notice when you appear before these organizations, such as the United Nations commissions, do you appear for and on behalf of a particular group? Who pays your fees? Who hires you to prepare the documents and to prepare the evidence that you are giving?

THE WITNESS: *The non-governmental organizations...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Which is what, for example?

THE WITNESS: *Disabled Peoples' International...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Right.

THE WITNESS: *...which is a Canadian based NGO.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes.

THE WITNESS: *It is located in Winnipeg.*

HIS LORDSHIP: So, when you appear before any of these commissions, as you have, you are appearing as a spokesman for the particular organization that has hired you to present whatever you are presenting, for example?

THE WITNESS: *Yes.*

HIS LORDSHIP: All right. I was going to give you an example. I see here, "Human Rights, Humanitarian Law and Tamil National Struggle." I haven't read it, obviously. I wish I would have, but I didn't know about it. Please forgive me about that. But, I see it is prepared for the International Tamil Eelam Research Conference which suggests to me, and I may be very wrong, that the Tamil Eelam or the LTTE or...please forgive me, I may put them all together and I shouldn't, because one may be political, one may be military, I don't know. It would suggest to me that you prepared this for this group?

THE WITNESS: *It was for a...*

HIS LORDSHIP: it was for a conference, but who asked you to prepare this document?

THE WITNESS: *The organizers of the conference at the University of California at Sacramento.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Who were Tamils?

THE WITNESS: *Yes.*

HIS LORDSHIP: That is what I want to know. And, basically...

THE WITNESS: *I was not paid for the paper, however.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Pardon me?

THE WITNESS: *I was not paid for the paper.*

HIS LORDSHIP: No, that is not the question. I just asked you who...whether you were paid or not, I don't know. But, basically what I am trying to say, as an attorney we represent a particular...and please forgive me, I haven't been for a while. As an attorney you represent a particular client and you represent that particular client's side; is that correct?

THE WITNESS: *In the practice of human rights and humanitarian law it is a little bit different, Your Honour. I am not on the payroll of any particular group.*

HIS LORDSHIP: But, you are paid by a particular group to present the paper?

THE WITNESS: *No, I am paid...to the degree I can accept invitations to do certain work relies on independent donors, many of whom have no connection with the group or the issue whatsoever, but they are donors to general human rights causes that may make a contribution to international educational development so that our attorneys can do human rights work, and it is not burdened on provided you deal with the Kashmir issue or the Sri Lanka issue or whatever. It is very difficult in the human rights field to work directly with a specific group and then, at the same time, go to the United Nations as a socalled neutral body.*

The Disabled Peoples' international is an organization of a hundred national chapters of disabled organizations. They represent people from...there are national chapters around the world. The fact that that organization wanted me to raise issues from the communal riots in 1983 at the United Nations was based on the overall organization's assessment that it was having an extremely negative impact on civilians in creating disability, but none of the members or at least very few of the members of Disabled Peoples' International or their chapters were, in fact, Tamils or had anything to do witb Sri Lanka. And I was urged and requested by that organization to continue the work on the Tamil question because that organization, International Disabled Peoples, saw that it was one of those hot spots where disability rights was a big issue.

HIS LORDSHIP: Thank you.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: I have a question arising out of that. You just mentioned, if I may, the work on behalf of non-governmental organizations. What about... the fifth paragraph talks...

HIS LORDSHIP: Of what?

MR. VAILLANCOURT: Of the "Karen Parker; A Bio-sketch."

HIS LORDSHIP: The fifth paragraph on page 1?

MR. WALDMAN: Yes.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: Yes. It just mentions her work involves consultation with governments, international bodies and opposition groups What do you mean by "opposition groups"?

THE WITNESS: *Well, for instance, in the situation in Burma, there is SLORC and then there is the DAB.*

HIS LORDSHIP: I am sorry, I don't know initials, what that means. Would you like to tell me...

THE WITNESS: *It is an umbrella group of opposition political...of opposition political factions including Ang San Suu Kyi's party that opposes SLORC, the SLORC regime which is in power. So, in Burma there are a number of groups that oppose the current regime. The Koren people, the Koreni people, I meet with them. They come to me, they ask me different things, and I explain to thern the application of human-*

itarian law in their situation

MR. VAILLANCOURT: With respect to Sri Lanka, have you done consultation work for Tamil opposition groups?

THE WITNESS: *Not what you would call consultation work, in that I was paid by them in a consulting fashion, no. I have, however, met with members of opposition groups in Sri Lanka and discussed application of human rights and humanitarian law with them. When you are involved in armed conflict situations, both sides tend to seek you out.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: When you say "paid by them,, do you mean...

THE WITNESS: *Not paid.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: ...whose Organization? How would you...

THE WITNESS: *I have not been paid by opposition groups.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: Okay. But, when you use the word I'them," I thought you meant opposition groups, Tamil opposition groups.

THE WITNESS: *No, I have not been paid by them.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: NO, I am not saying paid, but let us say consultation?

THE WITNESS: *I have met with them. Yes, I have met with them, of course.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: Which are those organizations?

THE WITNESS: *The LTTE, EROS, PLOTE,EPRLF..*

HIS LORDSHIP: Sorry, "LTTE," who?

THE WITNESS: *EROS.*

HIS LORDSHIP: EROS, whatever that is?Is that E-R-O-S?

THE WITNESS: *E-R-O-S.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes?

THE WITNESS: *PLOTE.*

HIS LORDSHIP: That is P-L...

THE WITNESS: *P-L-O-T-E.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes?

THE WITNESS: *And E-P-R-L-F.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: E-P-R-L-F.

HIS LORDSHIP: Those are other Tamil groups?

THE WITNESS: *Yes.*

HIS LORDSHIP: I see. Okay.

THE WITNESS: *I have also met with people who claim to be from some of the Sinhala opposition groups, though I have never actually been quite sure who they were.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: So, tell ,me again, what was the extent of your relationship we are interested here with the LTTE.

THE WITNESS: *M'mm?*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: I appreciate you just said you hadn't been paid, but you met them. What do you mean by "met them"?

What was the extent of your relationship with the LTTE?

THE WITNESS: *Well, the LTTE has, for want of a better term, sort of a foreign ministry of representatives who go to international forums and talk with people. Because I specialize in armed conflict law, I talk with them and I talk with the government as well.*

MR. VAILLANCOURT: Outside Sri Lanka?

THE WITNESS: Yes.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: What about in Sri Lanka?

THE WITNESS: I haven't met them in Sri Lanka.

HIS LORDSHIP: You have not met them there?

THE WITNESS: No, I have not met.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: I thought you said you hadn't sought out. When you go on a fact-finding mission, you are sought out by both parties?

THE WITNESS: Yes. I haven't done a fact-finding mission of that ....

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, I think we are going away from whether she is an expert or not.

MR. VAILLANCOURT: You are right.

HIS LORDSHIP: You are talking about now credibility which is entirely a different issue. Do you have any objection to me declaring this lady a...this attorney, this lady, an expert on humanitarian...on international humanitarian law?

MR. VAILLANCOURT: No.

HIS LORDSHIP: I am not quite sure, Mr. Waldman, whether I have sufficient evidence before me that this witness can be considered an "expert," with regard to the Tamils because she is an expert or she is very knowledgeable about very, very many groups, it appears to me. What in here distinguishes her so that I can say she is an expert on the issue of Tamils?

MR. WALDMAN: Well, in my submission, she is...

HIS LORDSHIP: I have no doubt she is an expert in humanitarian law, from what she has stated and what appears to be some of the papers that she has prepared and who she represents, but I am concerned about saying that I am satisfied, from what I have in front of me, that she is an expert vis-a-vis the Tamils, more so than an expert vis-a-vis disabled people. This is where I am questioning you, sir. Maybe the witness herself can help me out here. But, I will leave it up to you first and maybe you can ask her what you want. I just want you to know that I have a concern with that.

❑ ❑ ❑

(To continue in the next issue)

LTTE challenge U.S. "terrorist" tag

COLOMBO, Feb 12 (Reuters) - Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels have filed a motion in a U.S. court demanding the release of records which led the United States State Department to designate their group a "terrorist organisation", lawyers for the guerrillas said.

"In a motion filed with the court of appeals in the district of Columbia, LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), is claiming the right to full access to the record, the opportunity to show the legitimacy of its actions under international law...," said Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, in a statement issued by Ramsey Clark Lawrence W. Schilling from New York.

The statement was received by Reuters on Thursday.

The United States included the LTTE on its list of 30 "foreign terrorist organisations" last October, making it illegal for anybody in America to provide funds for LTTE, and making it more difficult for rebel representatives to obtain U.S. visas.

The statement said that the LTTE wanted to correct inaccuracies and distortions in the record which the State Department secretly compiled and was now refusing to disclose.

The LTTE have fought a 14-year war for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, but LTTE put the toll higher.

The statement quoted the court papers as saying that the LTTE was formed to fight the Sri Lankan government, which is dominated by the Sinhalese ethnic group.

"The Tamil armed resistance movement was in response to the terror, violence and suppression of the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lanka government."

"And the (U.S.) Secretary of State's failure to take (into account) the genocide and other wrongful conduct in violation of international law by the Sri Lankan government and security forces...toward the Tamil people makes her designation of the LTTE as a "terrorist organisation" arbitrary, capricious and an abuse of discretion," it said.

The rebels earlier asked a U.S. federal court to set aside the U.S. government decision, saying the LTTE did not pose any threat to the security of the United States and did not qualify as a terrorist organisation under U.S. laws.

Sri Lanka outlawed the LTTE last month after blaming the group for an attack on the country's holiest Buddhist shrine in central Kandy town which killed 16 people.

World interest in LTTE court case

The legal action filed by the LTTE against the US State Dept. for proscribing them within USA, is being keenly watched not only by the World Community, but also by 100 such organizations who had suffered a similar ban.

This whole case is organized and forwarded by Wakeley Paul who is a Sri Lankan and the son of famous Sri Lankan Surgeon Dr. Milroy Paul. Wakeley has also served at the Attorney General's Dept. here and have studied at the Cambridge University. The team of Lawyers appearing for the LTTE is headed by Ramsay Clerk, who was the US Attorney General during President Johnson's tenure. The main reason why this legal battle has suddenly become so important, is because of the leading argument of the LTTE Lawyers, who argue that since the US Constitution has separately identified the tasks of the Judiciary and the Administration leaving no room for one to eclipse the other, the US State Dept, which is a part of the administration, has no authority to ban any organization and only the US Federal Judiciary has the powers to do so.

Out of the 100 Organizations banned by the US State Dept. over the last 30 years, only three have appealed which were rejected. But none of them based their argument on this Constitutional matter. The LTTE lawyers have also made a request to conduct the hearing of their case by a full Federal Judiciary Board and if that happens, that alone will create American History, says US legal experts.

It's ridiculous but it's true !

COLOMBO, Jan 27: The Colombo High Court has issued an arrest warrant for Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, for the bombing of the central bank in January, 1996. Issuing the warrant on Monday, Justice A N Ramachandra ordered the police to produce Prabhakaran before the court on February 26 before the commencement of the trial.

The court also issued warrants for eight of the ten other LTTE members accused in the case. Two of them were arrested soon after the bombing which killed nearly 89 people and injured at least 1,000 others.

Letter

How sacred is the "sacred tooth relic" ?

A Colombo reader who wishes to be anonymous writes :

The Editor
HOT SPRING

Dear Sir,

Enclosed find a photo copy of the Letters column that appeared in the SUNDAY OBSERVER, Colombo of *20 August 1995* relating to the "sacred tooth relic"in the Temple of the Tooth which was very much in the news recently. I wish you would reproduce the letter written by a Sinhala writer, possibly a Buddhist himself, which argues with credible evidence that the socalled tooth relic is only a fake.

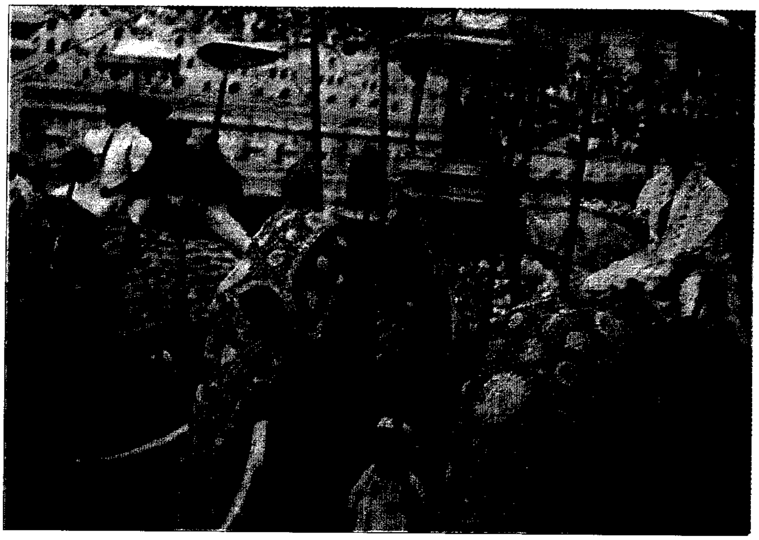
In the 1930s there was a history book entitled "A History of Lanka" by Blaze, prescribed as a text in many schools in the island. It mentioned that that the Buddha's tooth was taken away by the Portuguese and destroyed by them. In the series of letters published in the SUNDAY OBSERVER, it was even mentioned that a British scientist who viewed the present tooth said that it was not that of a human being.

We reproduce in its entirety the letter written by D.Amarasiri Weeraratne in the *SUNDAY OBSERVER* of 20 August 1995

Ed.
H.S.

From D.Amarasiri Weeraratne

Sir, I refer to Mr.G.de Soyza's letter on the above subject (so 16.7.95) Easily the most foolish and stultifying belief in Sinhalese Buddhism is the belief and worship of the Tooth Relic. The·Theravadins never resorted to this form of fetishism in the early Anuradhapura days. Even when the Tooth was brought to Anuradhapura during the reign of King Mehavarma the Therevada hierarchy at the Mahavihara had nothing to do with it.



It was taken and housed at Abhayagiri Vihara which was the seat of Mahayanism - then considered as heresy and therefore persecuted by several Kings at the instigation of the Therevada Elders at the Mahavihara. However with the lapse of time certain features of Mahayanism became popular with the Sinhalese and therefore the Theravada hierarchy at the Mahavihara absorbed and copied these apostasies without compunction.

Later, in the Reign of King Parakramabahu I, the Therevadins got round the King and got him to use his despotic powers to suppress Mahayanism and disrobe its monks. This was done in one night we are told in the Mahavamsa. What a ruthless dictator Parakramabahu was and how he destroyed all rival Princes who had any claims to the throne and how the royal dynasty of Ruhuna was destroyed never to rise again is a well known historical fact.

Thus with their rivals eliminated the Therevada elders absorbed all the popular apostasies of the Mahayana which they formerly detested. The chief of these apostasies was the belief and worship of the Tooth relic. Thereafter the Tooth relic became the palladium of the Sinhalese Kings and whoever possessed this relic was eligible to recognised as the King of the whole island. The original tooth relic brought to Sri Lanka and worshipped here till the Portuguese conquest of Kotte may have been a genuine one.

But it should be clear to any well-informed and intelligent Buddhist that the Tooth Relic, at the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy is a forged replica and not a genuine tooth of Lord Buddha. Sinhalese historians as well as the Portuguese historian Quyeroz all record that the Portuguese captured the Tooth relic with the ransacking of Kotte. The Portuguese historian records how they destroyed the

Tooth Relic even though the King of Burma was prepared to pay a fantastic ransom for its release to him.

The Portuguese authorities were then in need of money for their wars of conquest and were willing to comply with the Burmese King's request. But the fanatic Catholic hierarchy would have none of it. On their insistence the Tooth Relic was crushed to powder and thrown into the sea. The Sinhalese Buddhist zealots have a story that the powdered tooth was miraculously received in the sea by a lotus and it drifted back to the Sinhalese Buddhist custodians who enshrined it in a temple which continued to shift from Kotte to Sitawaka, Ambagamuwa and finally to Kandy.

As rightly pointed out by Mr.Zoysa the present fake tooth relic was cast by the Sinhalese from ivory. Even today the gullible and naive Sinhalese devotees believe that the Buddha was 18 cubits or 224 feet tall. All sedent and reclining Buddha statues are cast to these fantastic dimensions. Buddhaghosha the authoritative Therevada Commentator inculcated this foolish belief in his writings.

However, there is internal evidence in the Sutta Pitaka that the Buddha was a man of normal human stature. There are several instances in the sutras which indicate that some persons including King Ajatasatru were unable to identify the Buddha when he was in a crowd of his disciples. The belies the folly of his supernatural stature.

The foot-print of the Buddha supposed to be at Adams Peak is too large to be that of a human being. Again fantastic apologies are offered to cover up the foolish belief. **Emerson Tenant the British Colonial Administrator who in his well known book on Ceylon opined that the Tooth at Kandy is more likely that of a crocodile than a human tooth. But many religious beliefs are not founded on reason or intellect.**

They are founded on the gullibility and folly of the believers, The Tooth Relic is regarded as the holy of holies in Sinhalese Buddhism. It is a form of fetishism which is a standing monument to the gullibility and spiritual backwardness of our people.

❑ ❑ ❑

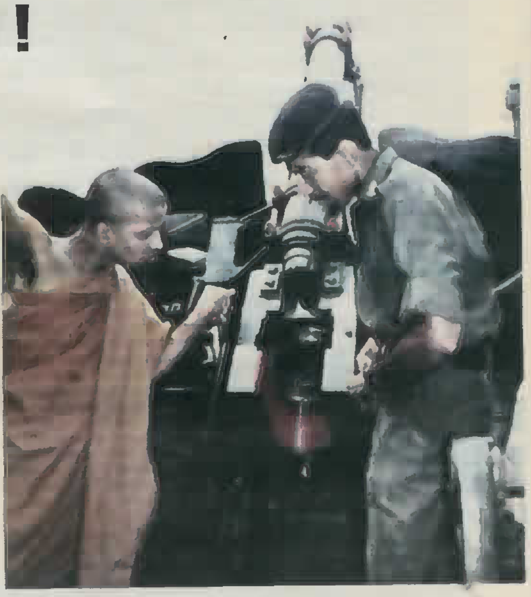
Buddham Saranam Kachchami ! Yuddham Saranam Kachchami !

A young Buddhist monk shows interest in the latest artillery gun used in the war against the Tamils. The gun was among other war items exhibited at the Bandaranaike Hall in Colombo to promote President Chandrika Kumaratunga's "War for Peace" agends among the Sinhala people. The exhibition was also meant to show the military growth of the country in its fifty years of independence.

The Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka, though not active participants in the war, are energetic upholders of Sinhala Buddhist hegemony in the country - the driving force behind the war.

The above photograph was published in the SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, of February 15, but the caption is entirely ours.

* * *



Seeking nibbana through war

Seeking nibbana through war: These two Buddhist monks, are photographed enlisting for the army two years ago. Whether they went to the war front with the yellow robes on, was not known. The Mahavamsa, the Buddhist chronicle justifies the killing of Tamils.

* * *

INDIANS SAY GANDHI MURDER VERDICT UNPRECEDENTED

By Sunil Kataria

NEW DELHI, Jan 28 (Reuters) - The death sentences handed down to 26 people for the assassination of former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi have no precedent in the country's history, lawyers and political analysts said on Wednesday.

Gandhi, then an opposition leader, was blown to pieces by a woman suicide bomber as she bent down to touch his feet during an election rally on May 21, 1991, at Sriperumbudur, 50 km (30 miles) from Madras, the capital of southern Tamil Nadu state.

Nalini's mother Padma and brother Bhagyanathan (face covered) after the verdict

"Never before in trial history have 26 accused been sentenced to hang at one go," said S. Doraisamy, senior defence counsel for the convicted. "After the Nuremberg trial, this is the most shocking order I have seen. We are going to appeal very soon to the Supreme Court."

At the main Nuremberg trial after World War Two, 12 top Nazi leaders including air force chief Hermann Goering were sentenced to death by hanging. Seven more got long prison sentences and three were acquitted.

"A death sentence for 26 people is unprecedented in Indian history," said R.K. Anand, the lawyer who represented former prime minister Narasimha Rao in his legal battles.

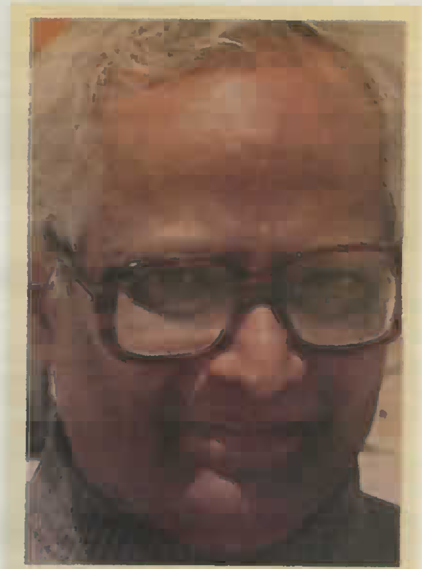
"I feel it is too harsh as the death sentence is normally given to people who carry out the murder. I am not sure all the 26 people carried out the actual killing," Anand said.

The defendants were among 41 people originally charged by federal investigators, including several suspected guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka and their Indian associates.

The LTTE, which is fighting for a separate Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east, has denied any involvement.

Of the 41 people suspected of links to Gandhi's killing, 12 have either committed suicide or been killed in shoot-outs with Indian police.

Three others, including LTTE chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, are in Sri Lanka. India asked Colombo in June 1995 to extradite him, but he has eluded capture.



"This is a massive death sentence . . . I fear a backlash from the LTTE.
- Dixit

Two of the accused were convicted of murder for building the bomb, and the remainder were convicted under various acts including conspiracy, harbouring suspects, and violating laws relating to explosives, firearms, electronic communication, and forging passports.

The closed-door trial was held under maximum security at a prison in Poonamallee, a Madras suburb, where the defendants have been held since their arrest.

Jyotindra Nath Dixit, who was India's high commissioner (ambassador) to Sri Lanka when Indian troops marched into the island, said he feared a backlash from the LTTE.

"This is a massive death sentence, the gravity of the crime of having assassinated a former prime minister is serious enough, but the fall-out of the sentencing can be even more violent.

"This can generate violent unpredictable reactions from the LTTE in India. If their cadres are getting punished, they will hit back," Dixit told Reuters. ❑

“Judicial assassination”, say some eritics

After six years of secret trial and unreported evidence given by 300 witnesses, and tried under special terrorist laws that made the death penalty possible, a specially designated judge named Navaneethan passed death sentences on 26 of the 29 persons charged with murder and conspiracy in the Rajiv Gandhi murder Stunned by disbelief at the verdict, a leading Human Rights advocate and others with him in Chennai termed the verdict as a “judicial assassination”.

The judge passed no sentence on LTTE leader Prabhakaran and two others who were tried in absentia.

Newspaper reporters were not allowed into the courtroom when the verdict was announced, and it was the police officer who led the investigation, D.R.Karthikeyan who relayed the verdict to waiting reporters hours later.

One of the prosecutors Jacob Daniel told the Associated Press writer Krishnan Guruswamy that the defendants were silent during the sentencing and betrayed no reaction.

Arun Sundaram, a free lance photographer whose father was among those sentenced to death, was working in a crowd of reporters outside the courthouse when the sentences were announced . He went pale and stopped taking photographs. His father, Suba Sundaram had supplied a camera to a photographer who police said worked with the killers, taking photographs to record the attack. Because he tried to retrieve the camera, he was convicted of obstructing justice.

❑ ❑ ❑

They face death penalty

S.Nalini (33),
A.Athirai (23),
S.Bhagiyanathan (31),
Murugan (28),
D.Viijayapandian(47),
Vicky (33),
Santhan (28),
S.Jayakumar (30),
V.Selvalakshmi (31),
Perarivalan (24),
Kanagasabapathy (76),
S.Padma (56),
Shankar (30),
Sivaruban (26),
Rangan (30),
Robert Payas (31),
Shanthi (30),
Shanmugavadivelu (53),
K.Dhanasekharan (55),
Ranganath (53),
Subha Sundaram (50),
Irumborai (35),
Ravichandran (30),
Suseendran (27),
Bhaskaran (65) and
P.Vijayan (32).

Five of these are females, and if the death sentences were to be carried out, it would be the first time in India that such a thing would have happened.

When Karthikeyan lost his cool

India’s Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) special investigator in the Rajiv Gandhi murder case, D.R.Karthikeyan was jubilant over the verdict. “The nation’s and the SIT’s singleminded pursuit of truth stood vindicated”, he said in elation. Two years ago INDIA TODAY magazine asked him some embarassing questions. The magazine said: “The joint director of the CBI’S Special Investigation Team (SIT) which investigated Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination, D.R.Karthikeyan , 56, resents criticism. He lost his cool several times while answering questions related to the SIT investigation in an interview with Principal Correspondent Charu Lata Joshi.

Here are some of the excerpts:

Q: Where did the explosives come from ?

A: Why should we go into that ?

Q: So you deny the existence of a larger conspiracy involving

A: What larger conspiracy ? No other agency except the LTTE was involved.

Q: Why did you write to the then CBI director, asking for deletion of certain case diaries ?

A: These are an organisation’s internal matters and not anybody else’s concern, least of all the media‘s.

Q: But deletion of investigative records is blatantly illegal.

A: It’s all on record. Everything will be shown to the commission This controversy is nothing more than a petty ego clash. Somebody is trying to help the accused: this is a pro-LTTE stand. ❑

Peter Popham *reports from Sri Lanka on the desperate plight of the hundreds of thousands of ordinary Tamils affected by the war in the north.* **(The Independent 10 February '98)**

Forgotten victims of war in Sri Lanka

With no end to Sri Lanka's 15-year long civil war in prospect, the plight of the nation's one million internal refugees is turning into a humanitarian catastrophe.

Fleeing from the ferocious battles along the road that leads to the northern city of Jaffna, hundreds of thousands of displaced Tamils are living in improvised shelters without electricity, running water or sanitation, dependent on rations dispatched from the South.

The Colombo government disputes the claimed size of the population of Vanni, the northern region, and only sends rations, for half that number. The result, according to a Christian Aid worker who recently returned to Colombo, is malnutrition on a scale unprecedented in Sri Lanka's history.

A recent survey of 16,000 children, found that only a quarter were properly nourished. More than a third were suffering from third -degree malnutrition, the level beyond which children exhibit distended stomachs and skinny frames, Anccdotal evidence suggests that small numbers of people have already died of starvation.

Malnutrition exacerbates the region's health crisis. Much of Vanni is dense jungle, and where the refugees have cut down trees to make shelters, malaria is now raging out of control, in the Mullaitivu district on the north- east coast, nearly 340,000 people were treated for clinical malaria in 1997, amounting to half of all occupants seen. The Christian Aid worker said; "Every other person one meets in Vanni has contracted malaria at least twice. It is normal to meet people who have had malaria seven times since they were displaced to Vanni.

> *"If images of northern Sri Lanka's internal refugee crisis were to reach to outside world, there would, be an international outcry. . .*

The epidemic results in a breakdown of resistance to other diseases long banished from Sri Lanka, such as tuberculosis and typhoid, which have again become common.

This crisis is made worse by the government's embargo on medicines. Along with the rationing of food and other goods, the government has since 1995, imposed tight controls on the shipping of medicines to the North. Even such basic medicines as aspirin and antibiotics are in short supply.

If images of northern Sri Lanka's internal refugee crisis were to reach to outside world, there would be an international outcry. But since the resumption of hostilities in April 1995, the government has enforced a strict blackout of independent coverage of the war.

Talking to people recently returned from the region, it becomes clear why. It is because the Government's writ runs no further than the areas which it has under direct military control. The far northern town of Kilinochchi, for example, which has been fiercely contested this week with up to 300 deaths on both sides, was formerly home to 50,000 Tamils. When the battle for the town began in 1996, the entire population fled into the countryside.

This is a sense a black and white struggle; where the government digs in, the population - 100 percent Tamil -flees. The only exception is Jaffna, where half the 450,000 population has returned since the government retook the city in November 1995.

The government's plan to rebuild the historic Tamil Library there has begun the work of creating trust, as have the local elections has held last month. But elsewhere the task of persuading the North's Tamils that they belong not to Eelam but to Lanka, has yet to begin. ❑

600 Tamils thrown out from Colombo lodges

Some of the dislodged people with their belongins at Jampettah Lane not knowing where to go.

Over 600 Tamils, men, women and children were thrown out of four lodges at Vivekananda Hill Road, on February 7. It was a pathetic sight to see them hurrying for shelter in pouring rain, dressed in the clothes they were wearing and grabbing whatever possessions they had. This high-handed act of the police was justified by the Colombo Director General of Police, D.M.T.B. Dissanayake who said that initial investigations into the previous day's suicide bombing at the Slave Island air force check point had revealed that the woman concerned had stayed at ONE of the four lodges

Others thrown out from the lodges sought shelter near temples and churches. Picture shows those who waited outside Ponnambalavanesar temple in Kotahena.

The people who rent out rooms at these lodges are there for the purpose of contacting their children and kith and kin abroad for receiving monies sent by them, or for medical purposes - all of which are not possible in the war-torn northeast.

Although the Colombo-based Tamil groups protested at this forcible eviction, the government, as is customary, appeared to have taken no notice about them. It was reported later that the leader of the EPDP group Douglas Devananda had made arrangements to house those 600 odd people thrown on the street at the premises of Hindu College, Bambalapitiya as temporary shelter for that night.

❑ ❑ ❑

V.Pirabhakaran, *military commander of the*
Liberation Tigers for Tamil [illegible] **Ani[illegible]atap**

'If Jayewardene was a true Buddhist, I would not be carrying a gun'

As it appeared in SUNDAY magazine, India, 11-17 March 1984

V.Pirabhakaran [30] is the chairman, central committee and military commander of the Liberation Tiger for Tamil Eelam[LTTE] , an underground organisation founded in 1972 and outlawed by the Sri Lankan government in 1978. As the most wanted man in Sri Lanka today, Pirabhakaran carries a reward of over one million Sri Lankan rupees on his head. He is gentle and kind but as one who heads the most powerful liberation movement in Sri Lanka, he is ruthless and determined in his mission to free The Tamils of his country from the oppression of the Sinhalese.

❑ ❑ ❑

Q: *What made you opt out of a conventional system and spearhead a liberation movement which you knew would be outlawed.*

A: The democratic parliamentary system, or what you refer to as the conventional political system in Sri Lanka, has always tried to impose the will of the majority on the minority . This system not only failed to solve the basic problems of our people but, in fact, aggravated our plight. For decades, the repression by the state has made the life of our people miserable. The non- violent democratic struggles of our people were met with military repression. Our just demands were totally ignored, and the oppression continued on such a scale as to threaten the very survival of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It was these circumstances which led me to form our liberation movement. I felt that an armed struggle was the only alternative left to our people, not only to ensure our survival, but ultimately to free ourselves from the Sinhala oppression. I have always been aware that our movement would be outlawed. It is for this reason that we organised our movement as a clandestine underground structure from its inception.

Flashback 1984 !

Q: *Could you elaborate on some of your personal experiences that compelled you to believe that an armed struggle was the only solution for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Were you, your family members and friends, directly victimised by the discriminatory policy of the Sri Lankan government?*

A: The shocking events of the 1958 racial riots had a profound impact on me when I was a schoolboy.

I heard of horrifying incidents of how our people had been mercilessly and brutally put to death by Sinhala racists. Once I met a widowed mother, a friend of my family, who related to me her agonising personal experience of this racial holocaust. During the riots a Sinhala mob attacked her house in Colombo. The rioters set fire to the house and murdered her husband. She and her children escaped with severe burn injuries. I was deeply shocked when I saw the scars on her body. I also heard such stories of cruelty, I felt a deep sense of sympathy and love for my people. **A great passion overwhelmed me to redeem my people from this racist system. I strongly felt that armed struggle was the only way to confront a system which employ armed might against unarmed, innocent people.**

Charles Anthony

Q: *At what point of time did you lose faith in the parliamentary system? What precipitated this disillusionment?*

A: I entered politics at a time -in the early Seventies - when the younger generation had already lost faith in parliamentary politics. I entered politics was an armed revolutionary. What precipitated the disillusionment in parliamentary politics as the total disregard and callousness of the successive governments towards the pathetic plight of our people.

Q: *How did you come to start the Liberation Tiger movement?*

A: I originally formed the movement with a group of dedicated youths who sincerely believed that armed struggle was the only way to liberate our people.

Q: *What was the reason for identifying yourselves as 'Tigers'?*

A: I named the movement 'Liberation Tigers', since the tiger emblem had deep roots in the political history of the Tamils, symbolising Tamil patriotic resurgence. The tiger symbol also depicts the mode of our guerrilla warfare.

Q: *When you decided to form the 'Liberation Tigers,' what was the reaction of your family members and those close to you?*

A: As soon as the Tiger movement was formed, I went underground and lost contact with my family.

Q: *When did you last meet your family members? Are they reconciled to your outlawed existence?*

A: I have not seen my family members for the last 11 years. I do not think they regard me as an ordinary person leading an ordinary life. They are reconciled to my existence as a guerrilla fighter.

Q: *After 14 years of struggle, do you think you are any closer to achieving your goal?*

A: After all these years of struggle, I feel that we are advancing towards our goal. The July 83 holocaust has united all sections of the Tamil masses. There is a massive support for the armed liberation programme of our movement. This is certainly a step towards our goal.

Q: *In what way have the experiences of the past 12 years changed you as a person?*

A: These yours of struggle have strengthened my determination and sharpened my vision.

Q: *Till now what has been your most rewarding experience?*

A: It is difficult for me to identify a particular experience as rewarding. The life of a guerrilla fighter is full of experiences: experiences of sorrow, happiness, frustration: each of which brings its own rewards .

Q: *The experience over the years must have changed your outlook. What are some of the dominant impressions and convictions that you gained by virtue of this experience? Moreover, your experiences would have convinced you of the inefficacy of certain principles and theories in practical situations, while at the same time bringing home the validity of yet others. Can you pinpoint some of them?*

A: Twelve years of experience has convinced me beyond doubt that the armed revolutionary path we undertook was the correct one. The other liberation groups who criticised our armed strategy as 'terrorism' have now realised that armed struggle is the only way out for the emancipation of our oppressed people. Moreover the guerrilla warfare has been an effective form of struggle.

Several successful guerrilla raids have convinced our people that the Sinhala forces can be defeated and freedom can be won.

Q: *Who is your friend, philosopher and guide?*

A: Nature is my friend, life my philosopher and history is my guide.

Q: *How does it feel to be the most wanted man in Sri Lanka today?*

A: An Irish leader once remarked that when the British indict a person as a 'terrorist', it implied that he was a true Irish patriot. Similarly, when the

Sri Lanka government refers to me as the most wanted man, it means that I am a true Tamil patriot. Hence I feel proud to be indicted as a wanted man.

Q: *Which was the most frustrating moment of your life?*

A: I cannot pinpoint such a moment in my life. But the most frustrating aspect has been the betrayal of some of my trusted friends: those who pretended to be sincere to the cause, yet turned out to be self-seeking opportunists.

Q: *How did the split between you and Uma Maheshwaran come about?*

A: I do not approve the formulation of the question. In fact, the issue should not be viewed as a conflict or split between me and Uma Maheshwaran, It was a problem between an individual and the Tiger movement. I am in no way responsible for the problem. It was Maheshwaran who created the issue. A leader of a revolutionary movement should commit himself totally to the discipline of the organisation. If a leader violates the basic rules and principles, then there will be chaos and the organisation will crumble. Uma Maheshwaran violated the rules of our movement and as a disciplinary action he was expelled by the central committee. Being the founder of the movement and the person who appointed Maheshwaran as the chairman, I had no other alternative but to uphold the decision of the central committee.

"Whoever the trainers are or whatever their expertise may be. the Sinhala army cannot crush the will and determination of the Tigers. We have a great moral power. A supreme sense of sacrifice, and a noble cause."

Q: *Today one finds that there are several rival Eelam liberation groups. Invariably they work at cross-purposes. When the goal is the same, should not there be a unification process?*

After all, there is more to be gained by using your combined strength against the common enemy In principle, are you opposed to the rival groups uniting?

A: I have clearly and explicitly stated that I am in favour of such unity moves. I even wrote to these groups on 5 September 1982 welcoming the idea and suggested that we are prepared to form a united front if all other liberation groups shed their differences and work out a common programme of action. But, unfortunately, these groups failed to formulate a common working programme. Instead, at every unity meeting they fought against each other and fell apart.

The tragedy is that these groups have no sincere intentions to unite and there is a wide gap between their deeds. I sincerely feel that these groups should set an example by forging unity among themselves rather than blaming the Tigers for their disunity. Once they unite we are prepared to join hands with them.

Q: *Spokesmen of rival groups have told me that all except you are open to the idea of uniting is this true?*

A: This is absolutely untrue. It is only a propaganda by other groups to undermine our movement.

Q: Are you alone in the struggle?

A: I am not alone. I lead a powerful national movement and a wide section of the Tamil masses support me.

Q: *Do you experience moments of loneliness? And if you do, how do you combat it?*

A: I have never felt lonely at any point of time. Loneliness is only a problem with those who are buried in their own individual egos. A true revolutionary transcends individuality and develops a collective, social consciousness. I live and struggle for a common collective cause.

Q: *Do you have any regrets about not leading a normal life?*

A: There are millions who, as you put it, lead a normal, ordinary existence. But we are fighting for a cause, for a noble ideal which gives us a profound spiritual satisfaction.

Q: *Are you worried over the fact that most Tamil youths face a bleak future in Sri Lanka?*

A: The youths are fighting a battle for freedom. I foresee a bright future for them .

Q: *Is it true that more and more Tamil youths are taking part in the liberation Struggle?*

A: Yes, more and more youths are joining the revolution under our leadership since they have realised that armed struggle is the only way to redeem themselves and their society.

Q: *How would you defend your movement from being called a 'separatist' one, and that you all are not freedom fighters but 'terrorists'?*

A: It is wrong to call our movement 'separatist'. We are fighting for independence based on the right to national self-determination of our people. Our struggle is for self-determination, for the restoration of our sovereignty in our homeland. We are not fighting for a division or separation of a country but rather, we are fighting to uphold the sacred right to live in freedom and dignity. In this sense, we are freedom fighters not terrorists.

Q: *Would you rather die than be caught by the Sinhalese army?*

A: I would prefer to die in honour rather than being caught alive by the enemy.

Q: *The Liberation Tiger for Tamil Eelam(LTTE) staged the 23 July 1983 ambush in which 13 Sinhalese soldiers were killed. The ambush was allegedly the reason for the Sinhalese retaliation on innocent Tamils. Did you expect such a massive retaliation?*

A: The July violence should not be assessed simply as a Sinhala retaliation for the guerrilla ambush. This view is a gross oversimplification of the event. The island has been plagued with anti Tamil racial violence which erupts periodically over the years. There were violent racial holocausts even before the emergence of our movement.

Violent riots erupted in Trincomalee a couple of weeks before the ambush. Therefore, the phenomenon of anti-Tamil racial violence cannot be traced to a single event. We are engaged in a protracted guerrilla warfare. There has been several guerrilla raids, several ambushes, and we have killed several Sinhala soldiers and policemen. **The July ambush was only a part of the warfare we are engaged in. It is incorrect to assume that one particular military operation has precipitated the entire violence. The July riots, you would have certainly observed, was not only aimed at the physical extermination of our people but it was also aimed at the destruction of the economic power base of the Tamils in Colombo.** Our view is that the July holocaust was a pre-planned, well-orchestrated genocidal programme against the Tamils, carried out by the racist elements of the ruling party. Initially, these racist elements did attempt to put the whole blame on the Tigers.

Then, suddenly they blamed the left parties for the riots. But in actual fact , it is the racist leaders of the present government who should bear the responsibility for this tragic loss of life and property of our people.

Q: *Why did you stage the July ambush? There are various versions afloat. According to some, it was an act of reprisal as four Tamil women had been raped. Based on my investigation I felt that you had to prove a point to the Sinhalese army who were jubilant over the death of your close associate, Charles Anthony, the leader of the military wing on 15July. The point, I guess that you had to assert was that the LTTE despite the loss of one of its ablest leaders, was still strong and capable of taking on the Sinhalese army. Is this theory correct?*

A: There is an element of truth in your findings about Charles Anthony and the ambush. The attack was partly a retaliation, a punishment to the Sinhala army. But still we feel that the lives of 13 soldiers cannot compensate the life of a great revolutionary and freedom fighter like Charles. The ambush was also a part of the guerrilla warfare directed against the enemy.

Q: *Do you think that the round table negotiations will lead to the formulation of a permanent settlement?*

A: I am of the opinion that the round table conferences will not bring about a permanent settlement to the Tamil issue. Our view is based on the experience of several decades. The Sinhala leaders never made a sincere attempt to resolve the Tamil issue. The present negotiations will also meet the same fate. All the major Sinhala parties and the Buddhist organisations are opposed to granting any form of regional autonomy to the Tamils. They are even opposed to giving minor concessions. Hence nothing substantial will emerge from this conference.

> *"I have never felt lonely at any point of time. Loneliness is only a problem with those who are buried in their own individual egos. A true revolutionary transcends individuality and develops a collective, social consciousness. I live and struggle for a common collective cause."*

Q: *Do you hold the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) leaders responsible for retarding the liberation struggle? Do you view them as betrayers?*

A: It is true :that the opportunistic politics of the TULF is retarding the liberation struggle. They have never taken any concrete steps to further the struggle: On the contrary they give false hopes, create illusions, and. try to keep our people in perpetual' bondage. They entered politics only to further their selfish ends. They never had any sincere intentions to liberate our oppressed people, nor did they ever put forward any concrete programme of political action. They never expected that they would be caught in the storm of a liberation struggle. The flame of a revolution is fast spreading all over Tamil Eelam. But the. TULF leaders are trying their best to smother the fire. In this sense you can term the TULF leaders as betrayers.

Q: *Is it true that the TULF leaders are afraid to go to their hometown and stay there not because of the Sinhalese but because of the Tigers?*

A: They are frightened not of the Tigers, but of the fury of the people who voted them to power on the promise of an independent state for the Tamils.

Q: *Do you think that India's good offices will result in anything tangible?*

A: India's efforts have given a positive hope to our people. But I do not think that the Sinhala racist government will utilise India's offer to resolve the problems of the Tamils.

Q: *Ideally, what should India do in such a situation to help the Tamils?*

A: I think that the government of India should recognise the fair and legitimate demands of our people and accept our right to. self-determination.

Q: *Would you suggest military intervention*

A: We have the courage, confidence and determination to fight and win our freedom. We should fight and free ourselves But we do need India's support and sympathy.

Q: *What is your personal assess-*

ment ment of President Jayewardene?

A: if Jayewardene was a true Buddhist, I would not be carrying a gun.

Q: *What do you think is Jayewardene's intention behind holding these negotiations? Is he buying time?*

A: There are several reasons behind holding these peace negotiations. Firstly, Jayewardene wants to appease the Indians. Secondly, he wants.to restore the colossal damage the riots have done to the image of the country. Thirdly, it would help: him to seek financial aid from western -agencies. Fourthly,the President . wants' to buy time to build up the Sinhala military machine.

> *"Induction of US arms is not only a threat to the Tamil freedom movement but also to India's national security. America's objective. as you will certainly be aware. Is not simply confined to helping the Sri Lankan army to crush the Tamil liberation struggle. Their ultimate aim is to secure a naval base at Trincomallee. Such a happening will convert the Indian Ocean into a war zone, and will increase the tension prevalent in the region."*

Q: *Is President Jayewardene a prisoner in the bands of the hawks in his cabinet or is he acting on his own? Is he being pressurised by the Buddhist clergy?*

A: Jayewardene is acting on his own. He has supreme powers. The hawks in the cabinet and the Buddhist clergy are behind him.

Q: *What is the role of the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka?*

A: The Buddhist clergy has played a dominant role in shaping the political trends in Sri Lanka. They have played a crucial role in whipping up anti-Tamil feelings among the Sinhala people.

Q: *Do you think that the Buddhist clergy is well on its way to establishing Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist nation?*

A: Sri Lanka is already a Sinhala Buddhist nation and the Buddhist clergy has contributed a lot for this cause.

Q: *Is it the result of the Buddhist clergy's chauvinism or is it the result of a natural alignment following the Catholic clergy's association with the Tamils?*

A: The Buddhist clergy's chauvinism has played a significant role in the establishment of a racist state system. **Sections of the Tamil Catholic clergy sympathise with the Tamil cause, but the Sinhala Catholic clergy displays strong Sinhala national chauvinism and are opposed to the Tamil demands.**

Q: *Do you have ties with other liberation movements of the world? Which are the organisations-who provide training and arms to the LTTE?*

A: We have ties with other world liberation movements. I cannot answer the second part of your question.

Q: *Which country in the world has proved to be most sympathetic to your cause?*

A: I do not wish to comment on this matter.

Q: *What is your ideological commitment?*

A: Revolutionary socialism.

Q: *Do you expect attacks on the Tamils in the future?*

A: Yes, I do. The forces of racism and fascism are actively working against the Tamil in Trincomalee and Vavuniya Tamils will never:be safe until they establish an independent state of Tamil Eelam with a powerful patriotic army to protect their life and property.

Q: *Is it true that Israelis are training Sinhalese armvmen on the techniques of anti-guerrilla warfare?*

A: So far we haven't got any confirmed reports about the presence of Israeli military experts in Sri Lanka. If the reports are true I won't be surprised. Sri Lanka is turning into a base for US imperialism and its agents. Whoever the trainers are or whatever their expertise may be. the Sinhala army cannot crush the will and determination of the Tigers. We have a great moral power. A supreme sense of sacrifice, and a noble cause.

Q: *What is your reaction to the alleged heavy induction of arms and ammunition from the United States to Sri Lanka?*

A: Induction of US arms is not only a threat to the Tamil freedom movement but also to India's national security. America's objective. as you will certainly be aware. is not simply confined to helping the Sri Lankan army to crush the Tamil liberation struggle. Their ultimate aim is to secure a naval base at Trincomalee. Such a happening will convert the Indian Ocean into a war zone, and will increase the tension prevalent in the region.

Q: *If and when Eelam is achieved. what sort of a nation do you conceive it to be?*

A: Tamil Eelam will be a socialist state. By socialism I mean an egalitarian society where human freedom and individual liberties will be guaranteed, where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be abolished. It will be a-free society where our people will have maximum opportunity to develop their economy and promote their culture. Tamil Eelam will be a neutral state. committed to non-alignment and friendly to India, respecting her. regional policies, particularly the policy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

Q: *In your estimate. how long will it take to achieve this Eelam?*

A: There cannot be a blueprint or a time limit for a freedom struggle. Everything depends on the situation: in our homeland and happenings on the international scene ❑

Rajiv Gandhi assassination verdict

Not a fair trial, Says Amnesty

Amnesty International is concerned that 26 people sentenced to death by a special court in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu on 28 January 1998 may not have received a fair trial according to international standards for fair trial and that the judge involved indicated the sentences were handed down for deterrent purposes.

Twenty-four men and women - 15 Sri Lankan and nine Indian nationals - were found guilty of conspiracy to murder the former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi. A further two Indian nationals were found guilty of murder. Mr.Gandhi was killed by a bomb explosion in Tamil Nadu in May 1991.

The legislation under which they were tried - the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) contravenes several international standards for fair trial, including the holding of trials in camera and the nondisclosure of the identity of witnesses. In addition, although the majority of those accused were arrested in July 1991, a charge sheet was not drawn up until May 1992 and a preliminary trial did not begin until May 1993. The trial itself took place in January 1994 in the Poonamalle Jail in Madras, designated a special court under TADA, where many of those sentenced had been detained for almost seven years since arrest.

Under TADA, the accused are only able to appeal to the Supreme Court where as under normal law they would have the right to appeal to the High Court before moving to the Supreme Court.

Amnesty International is also concerned that one of the accused, MS A Athirai, is reported to have been only 17 years old at the time of her arrest in July 1991. Article 6(5) of the ICCPR and Article 37(a) of the convention on the Rights of the Child state that sentence of death should not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International unconditionally opposes the use of the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In a resolution adopted in April 1997, the UN Commission on Human Rights called on all states that have not yet abolished the death penalty "to consider suspending executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty.

The Indian Constitution protects the right to life. India's highest courts have ruled that the death penalty can only be applied in the "rarest of the rare" cases. Yet on average a dozen executions are carried out in India every year for criminal offences. Most of those executed are the poor and illiterate.

U.S. STATE DEPT. INDICTS INDIA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

- The Time of India News Service

NEW DELHI; Glaring human rights violations in India have invited the Unites States' wrath with its state department coming out with a startling report of such violations last year. Perturbed over the report which the Union government has just received, the top brass in the bureaucracy has decided to keep mum over the issue until the new government is installed in March , source said.

Without mincing words, the report highlights poor prison conditions, arbitrary arrests, lengthy pre-trial detentions, prolonged detentions under trial, legal and societal discrimination against women, extensive societal violence against women, female bondage and prostitution, discrimination against prostitutes and scheduled castes and tribes, child prostitution, trafficking and infanticide and child labour.

The report also dwells on the systematic manner in which state agencies, including enforcement bodies, trample on citizens' human rights. There is a separate section on killings related to violations by security forces in some insurgency-ridden states of the country.

However, the saving grace appears to be the fact that the report mentions that the number of violations has marginally comedown in the last year. Justice Mallimath, a member of the National Human Rights Commission(NHRC), stated that though violations by state authorities continued, the commission had evidently succeeded in curbing such tendencies.

Though we have some problem areas which need to be tackled on a sustained basis, the NHRC has a good record of protecting the civil liberties of citizens" he added.

Justice Mallimath said that a large number of violations took place due to the arbitrary implementation of state laws. They occurred due to the conspicuous lack of an effective checks and balances system, the sloppy functioning of watchdog machineries and also the lethargy of the bureaucracy, he said.

It had taken the NHRC months of effort to chase government departments and take the bureaucracy to task before the commission began receiving reports of custodial deaths and rapes within 24 hours of an incident. When some state agencies did not take the commission's circular very seriously, concrete steps were taken to enforce it. ❑

January February Diary 98

January 1:

Seven Sri Lankan army men were killed and 19 others wounded when LTTE fired mortar bombs hit a Sri Lankan artillery position near Olumadhu village east of Mankulam.

January 2:

A Sri Lankan M-i 17 transport helicopter sustained extensive damage when hit by LTTE mortar fire at Olumadhu. The two pilots in the cockpit were seriously wounded and admitted to Vavuniya hospital. Five other-crew members also suffered injuries. The helicopter could carry 35 troops and was fitted with anti-missile and a weapons navigation delivery system. The chopper which was a write-off was valued at around U.S.dollars 1.6 million.

January 3:

Ten to 12 armed Sri Lankan soldiers force their way into the house of an Indian woman journalist in Colombo on what they said was a "random search". Nirupama Subramaniam, Colombobased correspondent of the INDIAN EXPRESS said the soldiers, including two women, went through her office and bedroom upstairs despite her telling them that she was an Indian journalist.

Nirupama who stays a stone-throw away from Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's Rosmead Place residence, said : "They were surprised I have a computer, LTTE faxes, and maps of the operational areas".

Noticing a photograph of an LTTE courthouse in a Tiger-controlled area in Batticaloa, Colonel Harish Hewarachchi who led the search asked her: "Oh, so you went to Tamil Eelam ?". The soldiers left after 45 minutes.

This was the second occasion that an Indian woman journalist's residence was searched. Recently, Sudha Ramachandran of DECCAN HERALD too was questioned by armed soldiers. She thinks that the fact that she bears a Tamil name was the reason for the search of her hotel bedroom.

January 3:

The local agent for the missing 32,400 mortars ordered by the government and which went missing last year is reportedly arrested and is under interrogation. It was widely believed that the LTTE had hijacked the shipment. The agent who is a Tamil, was in close contact with the son of a Minister, according to a Colombo newspaper.

January 4:

National Peace Delegates Convention at the Bandaranaik Memorial hall in Colombo. 1700 delegates from all 25 districts of the island approve a resolution calling for an immediate end to the war through negotiations conducted with "parity of dignity and without pre-conditions".

January 5:

A 5-member delegation of the International Relations Committee of the United States Congress arrive in Colombo on an acquaintance tour. They are expected to spend a week and have talks with government and opposition leaders as well as leaders of Tamil groups in Colombo. The team includes Michael P.Ernis, Richard Kessler and Robert M.Hathaway. They will be assisted by the First Secretary of the U.S. embassy Drew Mann.

January 8:

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka opens an office in Jaffna. Mr.T.Suntheralingam, a member of the Commission declares open the office at a simple ceremony. Also present were Mr.Javid Yusuf, another member of the Commission Mr.T.Vaithilingam, additional government agent, Mr.Paramananthan President of the Council of NGOs of Jaffna and other NGO representatives.

January 9:

ICRC office in Vavuniya robbed of Rs.325,000 and the lone night watcher Gnanapragasam Ravindran (37) was killed. He was found with his hands tied behind his back and his throat slit.

January 9:

Manickavasagam Suresh of Buntings Road, Batticaloa to be deported to Sri Lanka, according to an order made on this date by Canada's Federal Government Minister for Immigration, Ms. Lucienne Robilliard. The date of deportation fixed originally for 13th January extended to 19th January.

Suresh was arrested on 18 October, 1995.

January 10:

Heavy civilian casualties and damage to public property in the Valaichenai area in the East caused by continuous shelling from the army camps in the area. Two schools, Good Shepherd Convent and Vigneswara Vidyalayam damaged, and the schools are closed.

January 14:

A so-called opening of the Jaffna Public Library in a temporary premises, this being Thai Pongal day. While no Tamils were present, the opening was done after chanting of "pirith" and the garlanding of the army commander. Also present were Ministers Mangala Samaraweera and Richard Pathirana and the British High Commissioner.

January February Diary 98

January 19:

Regulation comes into force from today restricting visits to Tamil detainees held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act to one a week. Such visitors have also to produce a police clearance certificate. Protests by Civil Rights Movement and International Bar Association.Detainees threaten death fast

January 19:

Suresh case. The General Division of the Ontario Provincial Courts issues stay order on the execution of the deportation order against Suresh. Lawyer for Suresh, Ms.Barbara Jackman's success in invoking the jurisdiction of the Provincial Court in a matter reserved for Federal or higher tribunals is hailed as successful "legal coup". Disappointment in Colombo.

January 20:

Hearing on the Krishanthy rape and murder case taken up before the Trial at Bar judges. (Full report elsewhere in this issue).

January 23:

Nine EPDP cadres, including two of its candidates for the forthcoming local government elections in Jaffna are killed, and several others injured when the LTTE overuns a EPDP camp at Pungudutivu, an islet off Jaffna.

January 24:

A senior Tamil lecturer of the Sabaragamuwa Universit and two Tamil undergraduates are arrested by Galle police while lodging at a hotel there. The midnight arrest was made following an anonymous call received by the police to say that "some suspicious looking. Tamils" were staying there.

January 25:

Sri Lankan Minister Prof.G.L.Peiris leaves for London to canvass support from British politicians and brief them on the "devolution package". He is expected to call on Derek Fatchett, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Dr.Liam Fox.

January 25:

An explosion outside the main entrance to the Dalada Maligawa in Kandy (Buddhist Temple of the Tooth") kills 16 people and wounds 20 others, days before Prince Charles and other foreign dignitaries are expected to be received there for the 50th anniversary of the island's independence.

The bombers, suspected to be Tamil Tigers, drove a lorry loaded with explosives through a police checkpoint . The lorry exploded outside the temple's entrance, creating a big crater "big enough to cover an elephant" and twisting the temple's metal gates, chipping stonework and damaging the roof.

Anti-Tamil violence erupted in the city soon after. Cars parked at a Hindu cultural centre were set on fire,Tamil shops were attacked, stones thrown at the car of Cultural and Religious Affairs Minister Lakshman Jayakody, but police fire tear gas to disperse mobs.

January 26:

Sri Lanka announces a ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which commentators believe was more a knee-jerk reaction to the Dalada Maligawa bombing than a considered decision.This was the second time in 20 years that the LTTE was banned by the Sri Lanka government. On 22 May 1978 the Jayewardene government introduced the "Proscribing of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Other Similar Organisations Law No.16 of 1978".

January 27:

Tamil Tigers overrun the Vaskaneri army camp, eight kilometers west of Valaichchenai in the East. More than 40 soldiers believed wounded in the attack and at least eight killed. Several Sri Lankan soldiers who had decamped when the attack began found their way to the Valaichchenai fisheries army camp later.

January 28:

Rajiv Gandhi assassination case . In a shocking verdict smacking more of political vendetta than judicial good sense , 26 out of the 29 living persons accused in the case are sentenced to death. Only two were convicted of murder, but all were given death sentences on charges including help in planning the murder, providing transportation, housing or food. The trial was held in secret, and even the judgement was delivered in camera.

January 28:

Sri Lanka's de facto defence chief Gen.Ratwatte hands over his resignation to the President, taking responsibilit for the security lapse over the Kandy bombing incident. Ratwatte' resignation came in the wake of the President's decision to shift the venue of the independence celebrations from Kandy to Colombo. In Colombo, UNP demonstrators burn effigy of Ratwatte and demand his resignation from the cabinet.

January 29:

Local government elections are held in Jaffna for the first time in 15 years watched by tens of thousands of Sri Lankan troops. Colombo-based Tamil groups, most of them progovernment ,battle it out among themselves, despite some sluggish voting and indifferent casting of votes.

January February Diary 98

February 1:

Fierce fighting in Kilinochchi for the second day. LTTE overrun the defences and destroy the camps and minicamps of the Kilinochchi military complex. Voice of Tigers (VoT) said a large quantity of military hardware and documents were captured and gave the names of 24 Tigers who died in the assault, including those of four girls. 150 Tigers have been killed in the 2-day assault on the Kilinochchi army base. LTTE to hand over bodies of 54 government soldiers to the ICRC. The Sri Lanka Air Force engages in extensive bombing of the area and destroys the Kilinochchi Central College completely. Meanwhile, Tigers have occupied the heavily fortified built-up positions of the army base. Army sources say they await the arrival of the elite Special Forces commandos of the 53 Division to fight their way back to Kilinochchi.

February 1:

Massacre at Thambalakamam. Eight Tamils are pulled out of a house in Thambala kamam in the Trincomalee district and are shot down without any provocation by Sinhala policemen and home guards. The assailants were police personnel attached to three camps near the Tamil villages of Puthuku diyirrupu and Potkerni in the Thambalakamam division. What was termed as an orgy of violence in which the corpse of one victim had 25 bullets embedded in it, became known despite initial attempts to cover up the incident. The occupants of the house who had gathered for a house warming ceremony, first beaten. Thereafter they and shot dead. Residents said the previous night apparently After the incident, villagers killings were done by the were pulled out of the house and were taken to the police station there was continuous random firing concealing a drinking orgy. _ were pressurised to say that the LTTE. but thev refused to sav so.

February 1:

SUNDAY MIRROR, London, carries a sensational report. that Science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke was guilty of child sex with young boys in Sri Lanka. The report appears three days before Prince Charles was to knight him in Colombo.

February 2:

Fierce fighting between government forces and the LTTE continue at Kilinochchi. Arthur Clarke denies sex charges but asks that his investiture be postponed. Civic reception to Prince Charles by Colombo Municipality abandoned due to security concerns.

February 3:

Prince Charles arrives in Colombo as guest of honour at Sri Lanka's golden jubilee celebrations of independence now to be held in Colombo instead of in Kandy as was planned. Human Rights group Amnesty International calls upon the Sri Lankan government to investigate the Thambalakamam massacre. "It is important that the alleged perpetrators are taken into custody as quickly as possible so they are not able to intimidate the witnesses", the Amnesty statement said.

February 4 :

Half a million workers in Sri Lanka's vital tea industry go on strike demanding higher wages. Work at all tea tea plantations come to a standstill.

February 4:

Prince Charles presides over a muted celebration of Sri Lanka's 50 years of independence, with hardly any public participation. President Chandrika makes a speech in English, offending Sinhala sentiment and admits failure of the country in "nation-building".

February 6:

More heavy fighting reported in the mainland north. Attempts by Sri Lankan troops to advance from their camps in Paranthan and Karadipokku towards Kilinochchi thwarted by Tamil Tiger resistance. Kilinochchi town continues to remain in Tiger hands.

February 6:

Within six hours of Britain's Prince Charles leaving Sri Lanka, a powerful bomb explodes in Slave Island in Colombo, killing nine people. More than 15 were wounded, four of them seriously. The incident occurred at an Air Force check point

February.9:

One inspector of police, one sub-inspector, two police constables and three home guards are reported to have been arrested in connection with the massacre of eight Tamils in Thampalakamam on February 1.

February 9:

Police fire tear gas to disperse hundreds of striking plantation workers in the central hill town of Hatton, some 56 miles east of Colombo.

February 11:

Trincomalee Tamil students who have been boycotting classes protesting police massacre of eight Tamil civilians, including two students end the boycott after Trincomalee Brigadier Nihal Jayakody promises prompt action against the miscreants.

February 13:

The 9-day strike by Tea plantation workers ends, after a compromise settlement whereby the basic wage will be increased from 83 rupees to 95 rupees. They will also get a price-share bonus at current world market prices.

February 15:

A group of 42 local and foreign journalists, donning flak jackets and helmets are taken on a conducted tour of what was shown to them as Kilinochchi which was under army control. A Tamil journalist who was among the party and who knew the terrain commented that it was like being shown an elephant in the dark. Brigadier Lohan Gunawardene, general officer commanding the army in the region was however frank enough to admit to Dexter Cruez of Reuters: “We have lost between 800 to 1,000 metres from our original defence lines. Our problem is that they are sitting in our bunkers that were solidly built, but at the moment we are happy where we are”.

January February Diary 98

February 16:

A boatload of 52 Tamil refugees who tried to flee to India from the Mannar coast was apprehended by the Sri Lankan navy . They are believed to be in the custody of the naval camp at Karainagar.

February 16:

Eighteen Sri Lankan soldiers are killed in two separate attacks by the LTTE. The first attack took place in the Jaffna peninsula in Mirusuvil village where 8 soldiers were shot dead. Four others were wounded. In the other incident 10 soldiers were killed by LTTE fire on a military vehicle on the VavuniyaMannar Road.

February 18:

Forty Sri Lankan policemen and homeguard troopers along with a civilian are remanded for suspected involvement in the murder of eight Tamils at Tampalakamam.

February 19:

Suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas bomb a power transformer and blow up a diesel storage tank in aentral Sri Lanka, according to agency reports. The pre-dawn explosions caused considerable damage to public property, but there were no casualties. The explosions occurred at Talawakella and Lindula

February 19:

Students of “Kantharuban Arivucholai” - a home for children who have lost their parents as a result of the Sinhalese government’s war on Tamils - celebrate 3 years of its student magazine “Elamkathir”. Celebrations were held at the Kantharuban Arivucholai building presided over by one of the home’s students, S.Kanakaiyah. Mr.Ruban, in charge of TEEDOR, placed a garland on the photograph of Black Sea Tiger Major Kantharuban in whose memory the home was set up. The traditional oil lamp was lit by V.Thiyagarajah, the principal of the Kokkilai Tamil Mixed School. A Tamil drama depicting the freedom struggle “Urimaipor” was inaugurated during the celebrations.

February 19:

A large number of Muslims from Pulmoddai town seek refuge in the local mosque, fearing a major assault by the LTTE on the Sri Lankan army positions there.

February 20:

Eight para-military home guards at the Sri Lankan home guard post at 16th Colony village in Amparai in the East are shot dead in a surprise LTTE attack.

February 22:

In the largest ever sea battle undertaken by the LTTE, Sea Tigers take on a Sri Lankan naval convoy comprising four Dvoras, two gunboats, a landing craft and two cargo vessels on the northern seas and sink two of the Sri Lankan ships and kill over 50 soldiers and sailors. 62 out of the Sri Lankan security men are reportedly rescued from the sea. Two armoured personnel carriers that were being shipped are believed to have also sunk. Three of the Dvora boats were damaged. Eight Black Sea Tigers, four of them females were killed in the attack.

According to the LTTE, the three Sri Lankan vessels, “Pabbatha”, “Valampuri”, and “Sakthi” which was carrying about five hundred soldiers had started from Trincomalee Sri Lankan naval base towards KKS around 8 a.m. on that Sunday morning, guarded by two gunboats and two Israeli built Dvora fast attack craft (FACs). Sea Tiger reconnaisance units were in the area.

The convoy had sailed north at a distance of 25 nautical miles from the shore. Two more Dvoras had joined the convoy in the seas off the LTTE- controlled Mullaitivu coast. The convoy had got closer to the eastern Vadamaradchi coastline sailing about 10 nautical miles from it.The battle which began around 7.45 p.m. (LTTE TIME) lasted till 2 a.m. Monday morning.

February 25:

Tamil Tigers kill 50 government soldiers and lost six of their own in an attack on Sri Lankan army positions near the village of Olumadu in the Mankulam district. Sixteen bodies were handed over to the ICRC in Vavuniya. Following the LTTE attack, helicopter gunships keep pounding the Mankulam area for several hours.

❑ ❑ ❑

Health crisis in the Vanni districts: 500,000 Tamils face slow genocide

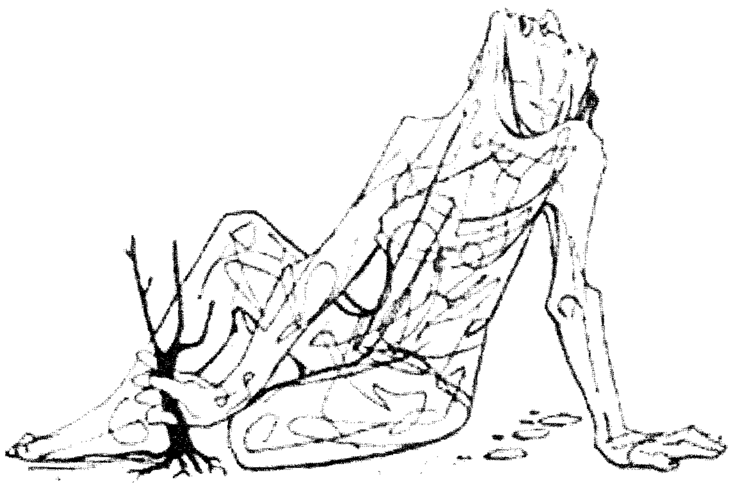
There has been an economic blockade in the Northern Province ever since 1990. In 1995 since the resumption of Eelam war 3 the Government of Sri Lanka forbade NGOs from distributing food, and with the exception of ICRC, distributing medicines. Stringent controls have been imposed on the ICRC also in the medicines they provide. Thus the government took upon itself the full responsibility of the distribution of food and medicines to the war torn districts of the Vanni (Mullaitivu, Kilinochi and Mannar). Instead of providing for its people, the government has pursued a policy of deprivation. It does not allow any outsiders to visit the area so that this information is not disseminated. It imposes severe controls on the NGOs which are allowed to work there. For instance, the NGO personnel are not allowed to carry cameras or even film rolls. Given below is a brief description of the health and nutrition problem which has now loomed large to crisis proportions.

HEALTH

(A) Health Services

The Vanni districts have only one district hospital in Mallavi, whereas according to Health Ministry specifications, they should have four Base Hospitals (one per 100,000) one district hospital (one per 50,000) and a central dispensary and maternity ward for every 20,000 people. For instance Mullaitivu district itself has a population of 233,000 ((the government has repeatedly disputed this figure which was compiled after an extensive census taken by the Mullaitivu government agent in October 1997) out of which only 108,321 are the local population. Out of 233,000 in Mullaitivu district, only 90709 are not displaced. Therefore, the health services are woefully inadequate especially to serve the most vulnerable segment of the population, the displaced families.

Again according to health ministry specifications there should be a midwife for every 2500 people and a public health inspector (PHI) for every 8000 people. The number of these field staff are also grossly inadequate. taking the district of Mullaitivu for example, for a population of over 200,000 there is only one PHI and eleven midwives.



Adding to the problem of lack of staff, the blockade on medicines, sudden increase in the population leading to the outbreak of diseases such as malaria, the extremely restricted permission on malathion (a spray used for mosquitoes), the clearing of dense forests for resettling people which has brought upon the population a variety of unidentified fever symptoms, all have further exarcebated the health problem.

(b) Diseases

- Malaria

OPD attendance in Mullaitivu district in 1997 was 727,103. Out of this 339,843 people were treated for clinical malaria. Facilities are minimal for taking blood tests on patients, instead the doctors say they guess from symptoms and treat the patients straight away with very strong drugs. Nevertheless blood film was taken for a small sample of 36,515 fever patients. Out of these 16,936 were identified positive for malaria. Of the 16,936 3239 were identified as having cereberal malaria which brings on certain damage to the brain.

Every other person one meets in the district would have contracted malaria at least twice. It is normal to meet people who have got malaria 7-9 times since they were displaced to the Vanni. This chronic outbreak of malaria has brought other complications related to reduction in disease resistance, brain hemorrhage, and an outbreak of tuberculosis. In 1997 approximately 1200 patients were diagnosed as having TB.

The government sends restricted quantities of sugar coated chloroquin for malaria. According to recent medical journals this is being discouraged as it is ineffective. The government sends old medicines too. For instance, the stock sent to the Medical Officer of Health of Mullaitivu in October 1997 was seen to be expiring in November, December 1997 and also Jan 1998. The doctors, seeing that the medicines

With Compliments

Raja & Co.

Solicitors

Administrators of Oaths

295 Balham High Road
Tooting Bec
London
SW17 7BA

Tel: 0181 - 682 2585
Fax: 0181 - 682 2575

Duvaraka

The shop that has
EVERYTHING
that you need

199 , The Broadway
Southall
Middx
UB1 7LZ

Tel: 0181-813 9126

Capital Autos

For Servicing, tuning and all mechanical repairs

Insurance work and free estimates

Tel: 0181 470 4789

*Specialists in
Audi and VW repairs
new & used
Audi spares*

***51 Milton Avenue
East Ham
London E6 1BG***

Matrimonial Consultant

Matches arranged irrespective of age and Religion

(செவ்வாய் குற்றமுடையவர்கள் உடன் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.)

Call Mr. S.Gunasingham
on 0181 698 5356

***1, Dunster House
Bromley Road, Catford
London SE6 2TB***

Katpakam

Cash & Carry

The traditional Tamil Eelam Shop

at economical prices

Products selected and imported from various countries to suit your Tamil taste

**Sole agents for:
Tamil magazines llike
Kumutham,Bommai,
Anmigam etc. etc. etc.**

Tel: 0181-694 8810

36, Loampit Hill, London SE13 7SW

Golden Star

22K Indian gold jewellery
Latest readymade garmends
Jeans, T-shirts and shirts
Latest watches & clocks

BIJOUTERIE - HORLOGERIE CADEAUX IMPORT - EXPORT
Cosmetics

Fancy jewellery
Recorded cassettes and calculators
Sarees of latest varieties
Stainless steel Household utensils

**199 rue de Fg Saint-Denis
Paris 75010**

**Mo La chapelle Ou
Gare du Nord**

Open: 10am - 8:30pm
Except on Mondays

Tel: 42092650, 46072644
Fax: 40059487

used are not effective, prescribe quinine too. Quinine is a long outdated drug. Patients need to consume high protein diet when using chloroquin. But the poor take it on empty stomachs and have suffered hallucination, dizziness, fainting and inertia.

In the activities of malaria prevention, the health authorities are mounting a campaign to clear over growth around settlement schemes. Malathion is sent only inrestricted quantities that they are able to spray sections of the region in rotation. So that this exercise is only temperory relief.

Other diseases

Typhoid has become rampant due to malarial infection. The government sends chloramphenical and quadril for treating typhoid. But it is reported by medical personnel that chloramphenical is not used now in other parts of the world because of certain side effects, instead of which bactrim is prescribed. The MOH in Mullaitivu is concerned about the usage of this drug.

Scabies is prevalent due to lack of medicines.

Rabies has become another fatal disease due to the increase in the population of stray dogs and the lack of medicine (which is very expensive even in the South). Stichneeds, a poison used for killing stray dogs is banned. The only means available for the medical staff is to beat the dogs to death which they are reluctant to do. Recently after much pressure exerted by the district medical personnel, the government has allowed only 200 g of stichneeds.

(c) Pregnancy and child birth

Worm infection and anemia have been identified as common afflictions for pregnant women. There is a severe shortage of iron tablets. The mothers are afflicted with malaria too during pregnancy. The maternity clinics are far apart. The conditions of the roads are extremely poor and transport is next to nil. It is common to hear harrowing tales of women dying at childbirth due to lack of transport services. The MOH lacks personnel to do a survey of deaths during pregnancy but surmises that these incidents are high.

NUTRITION

Since the government disputes the population figures provided by its own government agent, it provides dry rations to only half of the displaced population. Having no choice the government agent distributes it among the whole of the displaced population. As a result, a displaced family receives only Rs 315/- worth of food per month which distribution is also very irregular. Employment avenues were already inadequate in Mullaitivu, and the arrival of displaced population has affected the prospects of even the local labour. So that labourers in the agriculture and fisheries sector have been severely affected. As a result, starvation has become a normal occurrence.

It is calculated that third degree malnutrition among children, beyond which level the child develops extended stomach, expanded liver and a skinny frame, is around 40% in the district. A survey done by the midwives indicate that out of a random sample of 16,767 children under 5, those who were normal were only 4863. 6371 children were found to be afflicted with third degree malnutrition, 3186 children with second degree and 2347 with first degree malnutrition. Malnutrition is caused first by diseases such as malaria and bronchial diseases, secondly by worm infestations and thirdly by lack of food. Particular areas have shown even higher percentage of malnutrition. For instance, in a division called Puthvedduvan in Mullaitivu district (population 1900 families), out of 121 children picked out by random sampling, 56 were seen to be suffering from third degree malnutrition.

Malaria, malnutrition anaemia, hunger.....

Emaciated looking mothers and children, referred by the hospital staff, flock nutrition centers run by NGOs where wet feeding is implemented. The organizations are unable to cater to the demand. Mothers report that their children have developed night blindness and need constant supervision to prevent them from knocking into objects and hurting themselves after dark. There is lack of vitamin A tablets in hospitals which is essential for treating night blindness. The minutes of education department meetings of principals reveal that 3- 7 students faint in hunger in schools on a daily basis. The principals have also reported that sometimes they are forced to close schools by 10 am because the students cannot cope with schooling without food.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

To highlight drawbacks of the education facilities, one could look at the conditions of schools in Thunukkai, one divisional secretary's division in Mullaitivu district. The present facilities were barely able to cope with about 2300 students before the displacement of 1995. Now they have to serve 8571 children. Students study under trees. The schools need 313 teachers but have only 128. So the department is forced to employ 106 volunteer teachers with an allowance of Rs 500 per month, which money is collected from the displaced population at Rs 10 per month.

In villages and settlement schemes mothers recount the humiliation their children received at school because they could not make necessary payments to school or that they did not possess exercise books and pencils. Roughly 20,000 children in the district are unable to attend schools.

Recently teachers did a survey of the standard of education in the Thunukkai division and found that 210 students attending the classes between year 4 and year 8 did not know to read and write.

CONCLUSION

Given above is only a brief outline of the situation in the Vanni. We request people concerned with human rights and humanitarian issues to expose this and bring pressure on the government of Sri Lanka to immediately rectify the problems cited.

❑ ❑ ❑

M.K. SRI & Co

SOLICITORS
ADMINISTRATORS OF OATHS

Please contact: Mr. M.K.Sritharan

5 Eastcote Lane
South Harrow
Middx
HA2 8BW

Tel: 0181- 423 2141
Fax: 0181- 933 1361

Kasturi

Import & Export

KASTURI LIMITED

Fresh & Frozen
Seafood Specialists

290 Ealing Road
Alperton
Middlesex
HA0 4LL

Tel: 0181-900 1085
Fax: 0181-903 0827

ENGINE TEC MOTORS

SERVICING
CLUTCHES
BRAKES
ELECRICALS

OVERHAULING
BODY WORK
INSURANCE WORK
PRE MOT CHECKS

SKILLED MECHANICS
FRIENDLY ADVICE

Tel: 0181 640 1230
or
0860 226 476 / 0860770945
Ask for: Vel or Rajan

339C London Road
Mitcham
Surrey CR4 4BE

Soorii

Solicitors
Administrators of Oaths

- ○ Immigration
- ○ Criminal, Civil & Matrimonial Litigation
- ○ Conveyancing
- ○ Liquor Licencing
- ○ Wills & Probate
- ○ Police Station Advive & Assistance
- ○ Legal Aid

Tel: 0181 544 9285
Fax: 0181 540 9237

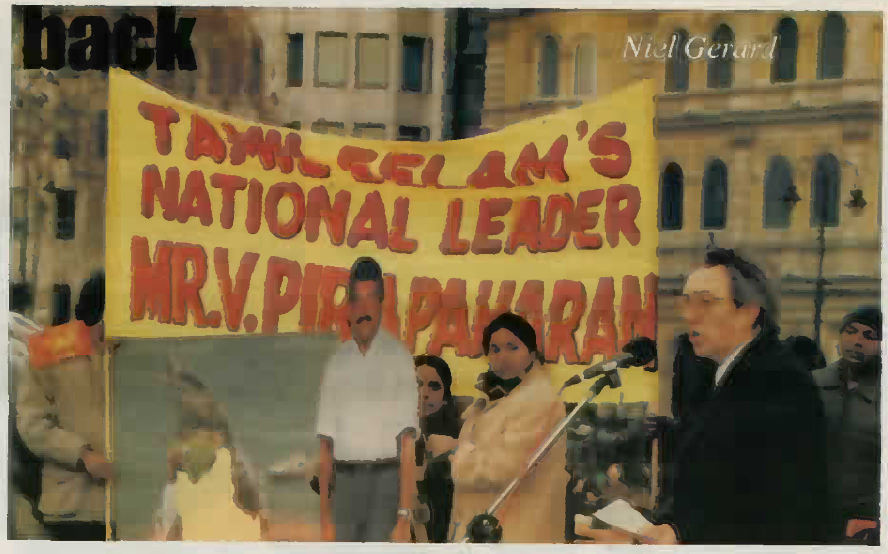
DX 58855
Tooting South

44 High Street, Collierswood
London SW19 2AB

British M.P.s back Tamil cause

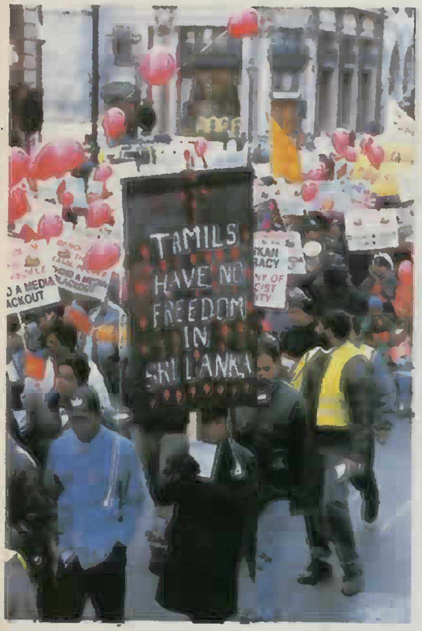
Three British M.P.s, two belonging to the governing Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn and Niel Gerard and the third, a senior spokesman of the Liberal Democratic Party, Simon Hughes, were among the speakers at Trafalgar Square, London, on February 1, pledging support to the Tamil cause. The rally was preceded by a massive procession starting from Hyde Park and ending at the Square. Scottish bagpipers led the procession which had at the head, a bigger than life-size cut-out of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Speaker after speaker espoused the Tamils' right to self-determination and criticised the flagrant abuse of human rights in Sri Lanka in which the Tamils are being mainly targetted. The procession and rally were also intended to demonstrate the hollowness of the 50-year celebration of Sri Lanka's independence on February 4. ❑


Niel Gerard
TAMIL EELAM'S
NATIONAL LEADER
MR.V.PIRAPAHARAN

Simon Hughes

Jeremy Corbyn
TAMIL EELAM'S
NATIONAL LEADER
MR.V.PIRAPAHARAN

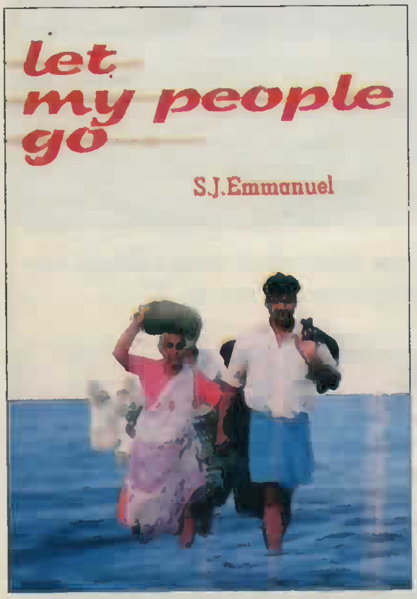

TAMILS HAVE NO FREEDOM IN SRI LANKA

SRI LANKAN DEMOCRACY = TYRANNY OF THE RACIST MAJORITY

February 4: Protest rally in Berne

Several thousands of Tamils held a protest rally in Berne, Switzerland on February 4, demanding freedom for Tamils in Sri Lanka. They held aloft Tiger flags expressing their solidarity with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Mrs.Angelin Fankauser, Member of Parliament in the Swiss legislature (in the picture) was among those who addressed the gathering, while pledging support to the Eelam Tamil cause.

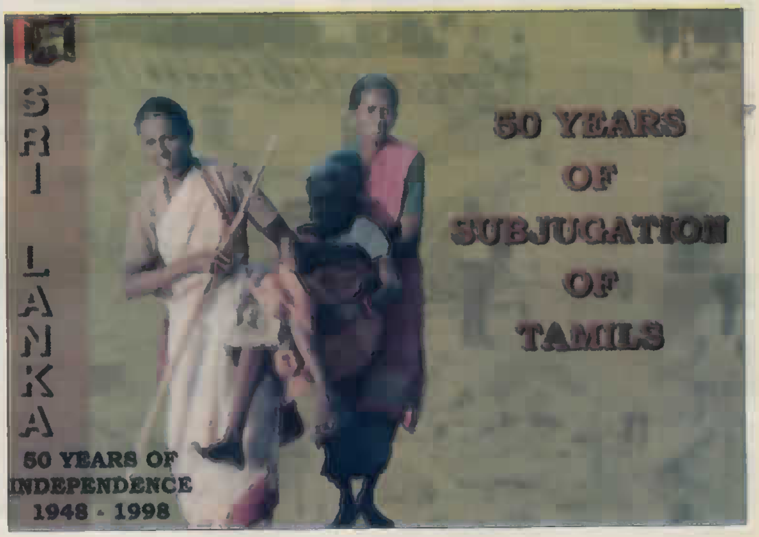
TWO RECENT PUBLICATIONS



LET MY PEOPLE GO is the title of a collection of speeches and interviews given by Dr.S.J.Emmanuel, former Vicar General of the Diocese of Jaffna. As a witness as well as a victim of the historic exodus of 500,000 Tamil people from Jaffna in October 1995 in the face of a ruthless occupational Sinhalese army, Dr.Emmanuel brings a passionate commitment to the Tamil cause in all his speeches and writings. This 106-page book carries speeches given by him in Canberra, Australia, in London, in Geneva, Switzerland, in Chicago, U.S.A., and in Siracusa , Italy. The book also contains a message from Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, and one from the Bishop of Mannar, the Very Revd. Rayappu Joseph.

The book is published by the Tamil Catholic Chaplaincy, Germany, Schuetzenstr. 87, 49084 Osnabrueck.

50 YEARS OF SUBJUGATION OF TAMILS is a document in colour, illustrating some of the misconceptions surrounding the armed struggle of the Tamils, while examining the historical conditions and repression of peaceful protests that gave rise to the armed resistance movement. Containing several pictures both in black and colour, tracing the history of the Tamil struggle for rights in 50 years, the booklet gives at a glance the story of how the socalled independence for Sri Lanka has meant nothing to the Tamils living in the island. The document is compiled and edited by the International Federation of Tamils.



Charles Jayam Thambyrajah Thamotheram

The Celebration of Life

An evaluation of CJT's work for the Tamil Cause *by*

PROFESSOR ALFRED JEYARATNAM WILSON

Born on 19 September 1918, Jayam having traversed the Psalmist's three score years and ten, is now fighting shy of the end of the millennium. God willing, he will enter the twenty first all refurbished to meet its challenges. Not for all of us is there a blessed long life and happiness. Jayam on the other hand has gone forth and enjoyed life to the full although he would have liked to live in a better world than the one which it is sadly his country flowing today with rivers of blood.

Jayam probably was more insightful and prescient to see the writing on the wall and left his motherland as early as in 1961 to become a permanent settler in Britain. Endowed richly with a zest for life, verve, and a passion to be at the centre of events, his life in his adopted home was never at a loss.

To understand Jayam, we need to look closely at his ancestry and the environment in which he grew up. His distinguished lineage goes back to his widely respected father, C.P.Thamotheram the well known Principal of Hartley College and his mother Thangamma Arulampalam, the grand daughter of Reverend T.P.Hunt who needs no introduction to many Tamils the world over. Having been bred in such a rarefied ethos, it was only natural for Jayam to manifest the verve to drink life to the lees. He is today the memory bank of the expatriate Tamils and the keeper of their conscience.

We can now comprehend Jayam's passion to live life to the full. He is a restless soul, always a gadfly of all that is true and beautiful. No sooner had he walked the streets of London than he organised the Teachers' Travel Club and the Association of Commonwealth Teachers. The Travel Club took him to India, Australia, Israel, the USSR (now Russia) and China. We can now understand why Travelling (not reading for which he was so much a glutton) maketh Jayam a full man.

Mr.C.J.T.Thamotheram approaches his eightieth birth anniversary on 18 September. Professor Wilson feels that the time is appropriate for CJT to know what his friends and well-wishers think of him.

Jayam lived through it all - an unending series of ethnic crises and violence, with Sinhala hegemonism rearing its ugly head in all its manifestations. You can see it all etched in Jayam's face. But he was not going to be a Jeremiah wringing his hands in despair. Conscience coerced him to be a doughty fighter for Tamil rights, and more importantly for their right to self-determination. His mind was creased in horror at the institutionalised racism in the North and East. "Why did they have to do this to us" was his constant refrain. And the outcome of his lacerated conscience was the fora for all freedom loving Tamils, THE TAMIL TIMES, which he has now transformed into an elect think-tank, the International Tamil Foundation, and secondly S.C.O.T. the Standing Committee of Tamils. Either one of these monuments would have hung heavily around a normal man's neck. Not for Jayam. They are outstanding contributions to the evolution of Tamil nationalism among the Tamil diaspora and evidence of his deep commitment and dedication to the Tamil cause. Jayam has no doubt been an indefatigable worker for the Tamil cause. It was soon after Black Monday (July 1983), Jayam spawned the idea of THE TAMIL TIMES. He flew the flag as it were, arranged the appearance of news in its pages and wrote stinging editorials on the evils that were being perpetrated by Sri Lanka's armed forces in the North and East.

In addition to all his numerous achievements, Jayam has been a pioneering educationist of established repute. He founded the West London Tamil School and functioned as its Headmaster during the critical years 1978 - 82. Previously he taught at the prestigious Latymer Upper School for nineteen long years and was recognised and respected as a teacher of great distinction. In all these endeavours, Jayam placed himself at the service of the Tamil community in Britain. An appropriate prayer for Jayam would be "Long may he prosper and his tribe be blessed".

A noted figure at every Tamil event, he will not be easily forgotten. We owe Jayam's wife, Florence, a million thanks for all that she has done to make Jayam the hero that he is. May he live many more years blessed with good health and happiness, for we can but readily testify to Jayam's vicarious life of so much dedication to a worthy cause. To catalogue all his good works within a limited space would not do justice to Jayam. He is surely one of those men who live in one generation and influence a series of future generations. ☐

Social & Personal

SECRETARY OF THE SHROPSHIRE / STAFFORDSHIRE TAMIL ASSOCIATION

LT.COL. ANTON J.N.SELVADURAI writes.

The Annual Fund-raising lunch will be held on 26th April '98 at the Crown Centre, Stourbridge, West Midlands. The association was founded in 1985 and since then has raised £ 18,000 for both local charities and charities at home in war -torn North East Sri Lanka, our Tamil Homeland. Funds have been sent to the Jaffna Hospital, Rufugee Relief Organisations, the Ramakrisha Mission Orphange at Batticaloa etc. They have also sent £8,600 to the Jaipur Limb Fitting workshop in Jaffna in association with the Rotarians Handsworth and Inter national.

Since the aim of the lunch is to raise funds, donations would be welcome to the Treasurer, Mr.G.Davadason, 98, weeping Cross Stafford ST 17 ODH Tel. 01785 665327. Cheques to be drawn in favour of Shropshire /Staffordshire Tamil Association and Crossed A/C payee only.

Please give freely, for the Lord 'loves a cheerful giver', and you will be blessed.

❑ ❑ ❑

Honour for Dr.Niles

Dr.D.Preman Niles has been honoured with a D.D.honoris causa by the University of Serampore, India, which is probably the oldest of the existing Protestant Universities in Asia.

The honour comes to Dr.Niles in recognition of his services to the Ecumenical Movement and the work of the world church with the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Council of Churches, and for his contribution he has made as an Asian theologian.

Dr. Preman Niles is a son of the late Rev.Dr.D.T.Niles who was himself awarded a D.D.of Serampore University.

Obituaries

Sivagamasountharam Pararajasingam

Born: 19 July 1916
Died: 5 February 1998

Mrs.Sivagamasountharam Pararajasingam from Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, resident of Surbiton, U.K., wife of Mr.T.Pararajasingam, sister of late Mrs.Mangayarkarasi Arumainayagam, sister-in-law of late Mrs.Vallinachchiar Sivarajah and Mrs.Manonmani Foot, mother of Balasingham, Balayohini, Varothaya singgham and Dr.Srimalini, mother-inlaw of Mahadevan, Maha luxumy, and Girija, aunt of Siva kumaran, Sashikala, Kothandapani, and Shanthi, grandmother of Dr.Mayura, Jananie, Keerthi and Smiruthi, grand aunt of Narmatha, Krishna, Lukshman, Sanjeev and Anushka. Cremation took place on 10 February at North East Surrey crematorium. Rites conducted by Swami Chaithanyanantha of Rochester, New York.

* * *

Dr.V.Cumaraswamy

(Dental Surgeon), husband of Maheswari, former VicePrincipal, Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, father of Savithri (USA), Dr.Vipulanandan (USA), Dr.Arunthathi (USA), Dr.Nalayini (UK), Balan (USA), father-in-law of Dr.Sittampalam (Babu) (USA) Dr.Giri (USA), Dr.Thiagalingam (USA), Dr.Sivaraman (UK). Passed away on 22 January in Lancaster USA.

* * *

Mrs.Pakiaratnam Kandiah

Mrs.Pakiaratnam Kandiah of Columbuthurai, Jaffna, wife of late Mr.Kandiah, daughter of late Mr. and Mrs.Ponnampalam, sister of Mrs.Parimalaratnam Thirunavukarasu, sister-in-law of Thirunavukarasu (Yoga Swami Ashramam), mother of Siveyogaratnam, Sivayoganathan, Sivayogeswary, Sivayogeswaran, and Sivayogan, mother-in-law of Varatharajah, Umashakthi, Sivadasan, Siveyogi and Amirthavalli. Died 3rd February. Funeral at Perry Bar Crematorium, Birmingham, England on 5th February.

* * *

K. Palaniappanar

Author, scholar, editor, publisher and Tamil nationalist K. Palaniappanar passed away in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India on 26 February 1998.

Son of the late Mr.M. Kridnapillai and Umayaparvathy, Mr. Palaniappanar is the father of PALA. NEDUMARAN, leader of the Tamil Nationalist Movement. He had three other sons and two daughters.

Funeral at Madurai on 27 February.

P.Nedumaran, 48, West Masi Street, Madurai.

* * *

Star
MUSIC

Tamil
Hindi
Malayalam
Retail &
Wholesale
Distributors

Audio
CD
Video
Video CD
Magazine

Quality First & Quality Always

Welcome Centre

Star Music
247 High Street North
Manor Park
London E12 6SJ
Tel: 0181 - 472 6084

[illegible]

Open 7 days a week
11:00a.m - 11:00pm

Welcome Centre
209 High Street North (oppt.)
East Ham
London E6 1GH
Tel: 0181 - 552 2727
Fax: 0181 - 692 7759

ARCHIES
NEW SUPERSTORE

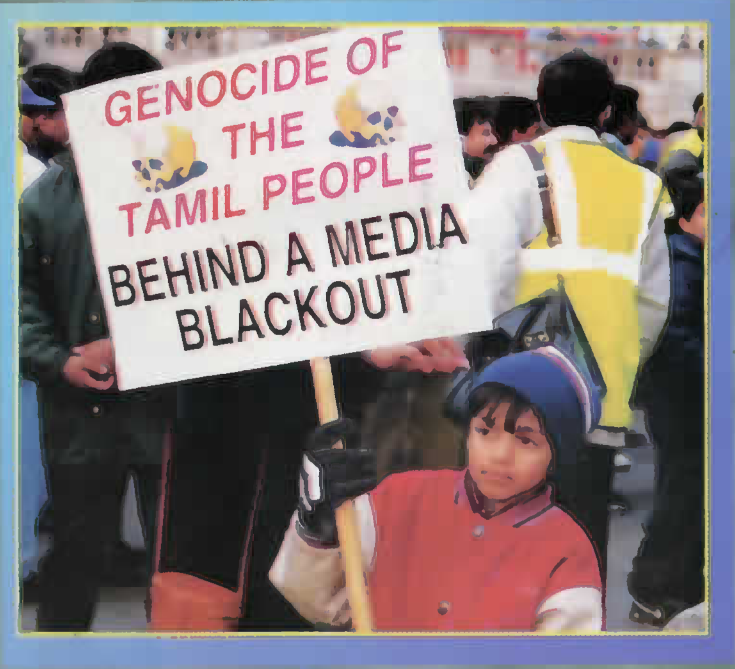
Stokists of Sri Lankan Fresh Vegetables,
Groceries & Beverages.
Fresh Sea foods from the Indian Ocean.
A wide range of new & old CDs & Videos, news
papers and magazines of South India.
also
Noval items like brass wares and cane chairs

We accept all major credit cards

All are Welcome

Open 7 days a week
8:00am - 11:00pm

205, Edgware Road
Colindale
London NW9 6LY
Tel: 0181 - 205 3652


GENOCIDE OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE
BEHIND A MEDIA BLACKOUT

Tamil Eelam is our Goal
Pirapaharan our Leader

BORN IN THE WEST

GENOCIDE OF THE TAMIL PEOPLE
BEHIND A MEDIA BLACKOUT

BUT CONSCIOUS OF THEIR ROOTS!

Printed by [illegible]